

Slavery and Civil War in Kentucky

LINCOLN AND THE BLUEGRASS

By WILLIAM H. TOWNSEND



A Slave Auction at the Fayette County Courthouse, Lexington, Kentucky, about 1848

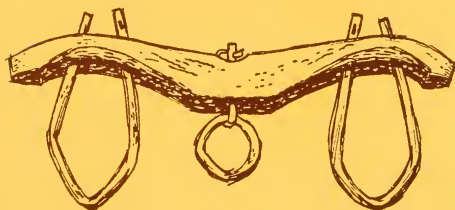
THE BLUEGRASS REGION OF KENTUCKY was the only part of the slaveholding South that Abraham Lincoln knew intimately. Even before the young Illinois lawyer had married a daughter of one of Lexington's leading statesmen, he had taken Robert Todd's close friend, Henry Clay, as his political idol. Mary Todd, who had grown to young womanhood in Lexington, widened Lincoln's circle of acquaintances in the Bluegrass to include such diverse personalities as Judge George Robertson, Lincoln's counsel, who supported emancipation in the abstract but indignantly demanded that the President protect his slave property; the fiery Cassius M. Clay, who urged Lincoln to proclaim immediate emancipation and who raised a motley battalion in Washington, D. C., to defend the Capital; Dr. Robert J. Breckinridge, the doughty Presbyterian minister who refused to ask special treatment for the members of his family in the Confederacy; and the Doctor's nephew, Vice-President John C. Breckinridge, who rejected a demand that he use his position to thwart Lincoln's election but immediately took up arms against him.

With the gifted pen that has won praise from so many students of Lincoln and the Civil War, William H. Townsend here describes the fabulous Bluegrass region which had so large a part in shaping Lincoln's views about emancipation and secession. Lexington, heart of the Bluegrass, had early been called the "Athens of the West," and the grace and culture of its pleasure-loving aristocracy could hardly have failed to impress any thinking man. Here Lincoln saw the genteel side of slavery—the trusted mammies whose word was law, the valets whose talent for mixing mint juleps was famous—but he also saw the public whipping post, slave jails, and slave auctions, and the disregard for the humanity of the Negro.

Lincoln and the Bluegrass has grown out of an earlier work by Mr. Townsend, *Lincoln and His Wife's Home Town*, published twenty-six years ago. The appearance of so much additional Lincoln and Civil War source materials in the past quarter of a century has enabled Mr. Townsend to develop his study of Lincoln's relation to the Bluegrass with greater insight and clarity. The book contains sixty illustrations, many of them previously unpublished photographs from Mr. Townsend's collection.

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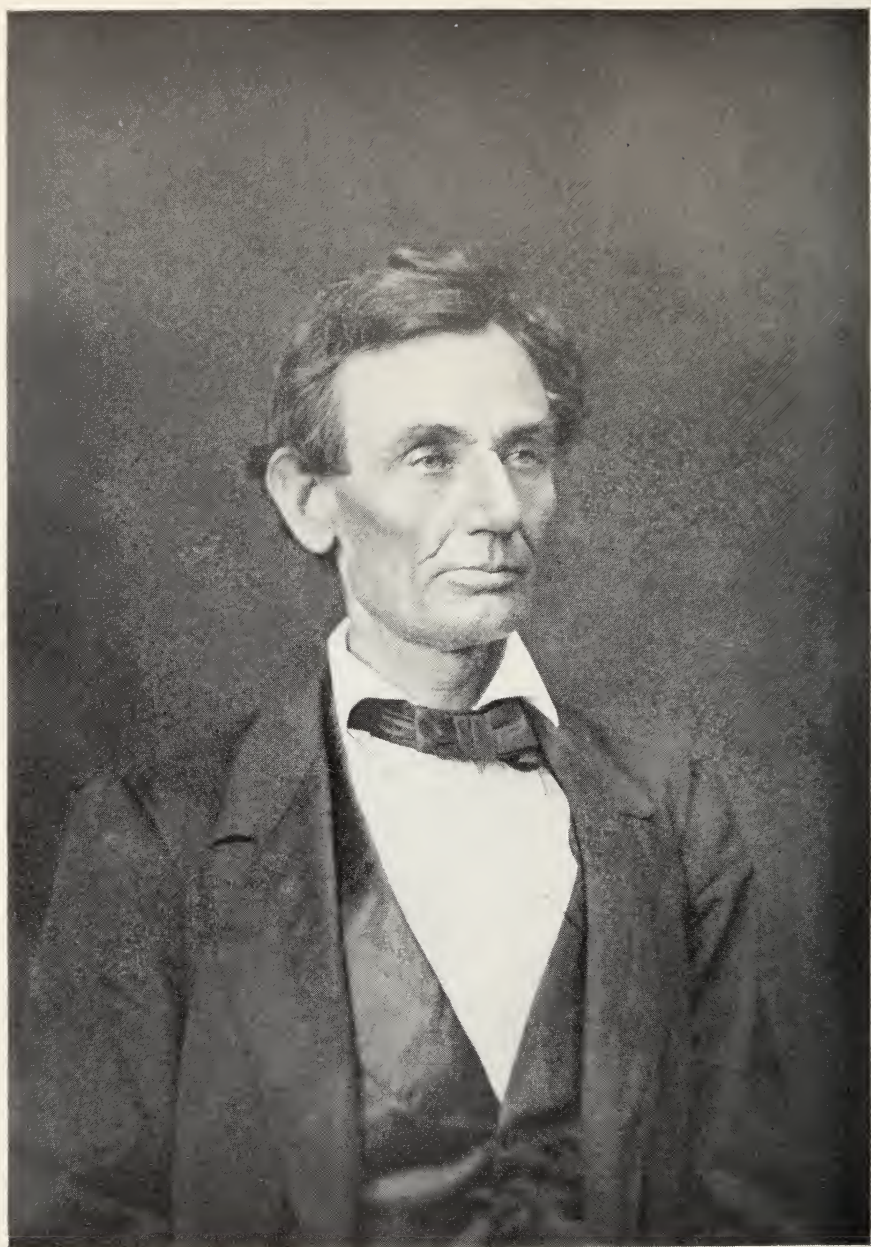


The
Cassius Marcellus Clay
Edition

Autographed by the author
for members of the

CIVIL WAR
BOOK CLUB

Wm. H. Rouse



ABRAHAM LINCOLN
Meserve Collection

Lincoln and the Bluegrass

SLAVERY AND CIVIL WAR IN
KENTUCKY

By William H. Townsend

University of Kentucky Press

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LINCOLN
Room

To my wife Genevieve, our daughter Mary Genevieve,
and our young granddaughter Mary Elodie

73a 57 HSEARCY

Preface

IT HAS been more than twenty-five years since *Lincoln and His Wife's Home Town*, from which the present work has developed, first came off the press. During this period I have had the benefit of important and relevant sources which were either unknown or unavailable in 1929. The Abraham Lincoln Association of Springfield, Illinois, has assembled *The Collected Works* into eight large volumes which contain hundreds of Lincoln letters and documents heretofore unpublished. The Herndon-Weik manuscripts and the Robert Todd Lincoln Collection are now open for inspection and research in the Library of Congress. The diaries of the Reverend William Moody Pratt, a veritable gold mine of information about Lexington and the Bluegrass from 1833 until long after the Civil War, are in the Library of the University of Kentucky. Diligence and luck have added to my own collection of Lincolniana many items which have proved useful in the present undertaking. As before, whenever possible I have allowed original sources to speak for themselves.

It is my opinion that the analysis of this new material affords a broader perspective and deeper insight into the affirmation made in the preface to the earlier book—that Abraham Lincoln's personal contacts with slavery in the Bluegrass gave him a firsthand knowledge of the "peculiar institution" that he could have acquired in no other way. The impact of these experiences upon Abraham Lincoln and the circumstances sur-

rounding them can hardly be more aptly stated than in the following paragraphs of that preface.

"Lexington lay in the heart of the largest slaveholding section of Kentucky. Here in the far-famed Bluegrass region, with its chivalry and romance, its culture and traditions, the various aspects of African bondage were fairly and accurately presented. Here the future Emancipator saw vexatious problems and the difficulties of their solution from the Southerner's own viewpoint. Here, also, the fires of antislavery agitation burned fitfully but furiously, giving Lincoln, as he said, his 'first real specific alarm about the institution of slavery.'

"Lincoln's well-known conservatism on the 'dominant question' went a long way toward making him the nominee of the Republican party for President in 1860. It brought to him the powerful support of the Border States delegates who believed that he possessed a sympathetic understanding of their problem and could deal with it better than any other candidate before the convention. During the anxious days following his election, as the nation drifted steadily into Civil War, the new President was gravely aware of the importance of Kentucky in the approaching conflict. 'I think to lose Kentucky is nearly the same as to lose the whole game,' he wrote Senator Browning. Lincoln also realized that the first danger of secession in Kentucky centered about the capital city of the Bluegrass, and in the succeeding pages we shall see how desperately the struggle was waged in that section and how eventually the state was saved to the Union."

Here, near the borderland of freedom, domestic ties were rent asunder, brother against brother, father against son, the whole social structure crumbling in the vast upheaval. Throughout those dark, bitter, tragic days, Lincoln never lost contact with Kentucky. Always she and her citizens, even those arrayed in arms against the government, were the objects of his patient solicitude.

In the laborious task of locating and assembling material, it has been my good fortune to have the constant and capable

co-operation of various public institutions, as well as the active assistance and kindly interest of many individual friends. Among the former, I must thank the Lexington Public Library, Transylvania College Library, University of Kentucky Library, the Filson Club, Louisville Free Public Library, Kentucky State Historical Society, Library of Congress, Wisconsin Historical Society, Abraham Lincoln Foundation, State University of Iowa Library, Illinois State Historical Library, and the Department of Lincolniana of Lincoln Memorial University.

Among the latter, my warmest thanks and appreciation are due to Clyde Walton, Iowa City, Iowa; Irving Stone, Beverly Hills, California; Ralph Newman and Mrs. Foreman M. Lebold, Chicago, Illinois; Mrs. Philip B. Kunhardt, Morristown, New Jersey; Bruce Catton, New York City; Donald M. Hobart, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Percy C. Powell and David C. Mearns, Washington, D. C.; R. Gerald McMurtry, Harrogate, Tennessee; Louis Warren, Fort Wayne, Indiana; Mrs. Lewis C. Williams, Evanston, Illinois; Holman Hamilton, Hambleton Tapp, Miss Jacqueline Bull, Miss Roemel Henry, Miss Virginia Hayes, Joe Jordan, Mrs. Louis Lee Haggin, Louis Lee Haggin, II, and Dr. Josephine Hunt, Lexington, Kentucky.

Mrs. Martha B. Cheek, wife of Professor Frank J. Cheek, Jr., of the University of Kentucky, a great-great-niece of Denton Offutt, has generously made available to me the voluminous records accumulated by her through long years of research concerning the Offutt family.

I must express particularly my abiding gratitude to my dear friends J. Winston Coleman and Thomas D. Clark of Lexington, Kentucky, and Harry E. Pratt and his wife Marion of Springfield, Illinois. It is hardly too much to say that without their invaluable aid in research suggestions, verifying sources, supplying pictures, reading the manuscript, and, above all, their constant encouragement, the writing of this book in such "off hours" as an active law practice affords could not have been accomplished. Mrs. Mary Ada Sullivan has checked citations, arranged footnotes, and prepared the manuscript for the

publisher with an unflagging interest and efficiency much beyond the call of duty.

This new work has been written almost upon the very site of Mme. Mentelle's famous boarding school that nurtured Mary Todd. I express the hope that the reader may find in these pages interesting and significant glimpses of her early years and of the friends and background of her girlhood, as well as a clearer view of some of the forces and events that made Abraham Lincoln the greatest exponent of human freedom, and that certain individuals, hitherto but little known to history, may receive just and adequate recognition for the deed that made them vivid, outstanding figures in their own day and generation.

WILLIAM H. TOWNSEND

February 12, 1955
28 Mentelle Park
Lexington, Kentucky

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Athens of the West

LATE afternoon on an early June day, 1775, in that new, enchanted region called "Kaintuckee"¹: A small party of hunters—lean, bronzed, muscular, with rifles in hand and scalping knives dangling from the girdles of their buckskin shirts—emerged from a dense canebrake that skirted the waters of Elkhorn Creek. Hungry and tired, after a leisurely reconnoiter they pitched camp for the night beside a clear bubbling spring that gushed from a crevice in a huge slab of moss-covered limestone.²

The frugal supper of parched corn and jerked venison over, the woodsmen sat around the blazing logs puffing their battered, old pipes in drowsy conversation. The day's journey had led them through the most picturesque and fertile country in all the western wilderness:³ luxuriant vegetation rooted in a loose, deep, black mold; giant trees of red and bur oak, yellow poplar, sugar maple, walnut, blue ash, beech, and wild cherry; violets, honeysuckle, and wild roses that perfumed the dim, shaded ravines; columbine, sweet William, and forget-me-nots basking in the placid sunshine; songbirds—the cardinal, bluebird, the

brown thrush, and the mockingbird; pheasants, partridges, wild turkey and the ivory-billed woodcock; and long vistas of gently undulating meadowland covered with bluegrass, dotted with browsing herds of elk, buffalo, and deer. Under the spell of this veritable paradise someone about the fire suggested that a station be established on the site of the camp, and various names were proposed for it. "York" and "Lancaster" were briefly considered, but both were dropped with a shout for "Lexington."

On the previous April 19 the first patriot blood of the Revolution had been shed on the village commons at Lexington in distant New England, and avenging minutemen had crimsoned the green hedges along the road from Concord to Boston with King George's fallen redcoats. The news of this stirring event was just now slowly trickling through the wilderness, and every pioneer heart glowed with patriotism. Lexington should indeed be the name of the new settlement, and by the fireside that night in June, 1775, the outpost on the banks of the Elkhorn was dedicated to the cause of American liberty.⁴

The rude blockhouse erected on the site soon gave way to a regular stockade of more than a dozen cabins built in the form of a parallelogram with palisades and heavy gates of pointed logs. With the close of the Revolution the settlement began a steady growth. Streets were laid off, churches established, and the first schoolhouse in Kentucky was erected on the public square called "Cheapside" after the historic old marketplace in London.⁵ Transylvania Seminary, the first institution of higher learning in the West, was founded within the next few years.

On August 11, 1787, John Bradford published the first newspaper west of the Alleghenies. The early issues of the *Kentucke Gazette* consisted of four pages scarcely larger than a folio letterhead, embellished with crude woodcuts which the editor whittled into shape with his pocketknife.⁶ They were printed on an old, dilapidated hand press from type floated down the Ohio on a flatboat to the village of Limestone (now

Maysville) and carried to Lexington by pack horses across swollen streams through the dense forest infested by skulking Indians.

The *Gazette* was a boon to the isolated pioneers who were starved for news, and every copy was eagerly devoured item by item. There was a page which contained "Foreign Intelligence" from London, Paris, Vienna, and Constantinople, four months old, and another devoted to "American Occurrences" from New York and Philadelphia, which had happened eight weeks before. "Locals," though scarce, were not wholly lacking. The editor condemned the practice of "taming bears," of "lighting fires with rifles"; he noted that "persons who subscribe to the frame meeting house can pay in cattle or whiskey." Charles Bland advertised: "I will not pay a note given to William Turner for three second rate cows, till he returns a rifle, blanket, and tomahawk I loaned him." The public was warned that certain caches of "wheat, corn, and potatoes are impregnated with Arsenic or other Subtil poison" for marauding Indians "to trap them." The editor promised his readers "to give quick and general information concerning the intentions and behavior of our neighboring enemies, and put us on guard." The town trustees announced that "running or racing" horses on the streets would no longer be allowed. Warned Bradford: "That noted horse thief Mose Murphy is said to have been in this town in the early morning of Thursday last." A few days later the *Gazette* laconically announced that "on Tuesday last Jesse Suggs was executed in this town for horse stealing, agreeable to sentence of the late court of Oyer and Terminer."

Early in June, 1792, the first legislature convened in Lexington. Here the government of the new commonwealth was organized, and Governor Isaac Shelby took the oath of office with much pomp and ceremony. With the arrival of statehood Lexington rapidly became not only the foremost town of Kentucky, but of the entire Western Country. The haunting dread of Indian attacks gradually faded away. Coonskin caps and buckskin hunting shirts were replaced by fashionable attire of

the latest eastern styles, as the prosperous inhabitants grew more and more absorbed in the business of the town and the cultivation of the fine arts.

Stores bulged with large and varied assortments of merchandise—glass, china, hardware, coffee, Madeira and port wines, India nankeen, dimity, calicoes, tamboured and jaconet muslins, raw silk hose, imported linens and laces. Show windows which displayed samples of these luxuries also advertised luridly labeled packages of Sovereign Ointment for Itch, Dr. Gann's Anti-Bilious Pills, Damask Lip Salves, and Hamilton's Grand Restorative for Dissipated Pleasures. Posted in public places were attractive prices being paid by New Orleans dealers for Kentucky products delivered there by raft and flatboat.

On the middle fork of Elkhorn Creek that meandered through the outskirts of the rapidly growing town Edward West experimented with a "specimen of a boat worked by steam applied to oars," which the *Gazette* predicted "will be of great benefit in Navigation of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers," adding that "Mr. West intends to apply for a patent for this discovery."

Another invention newly arrived also received much public attention. It was the "physiognatrace," by which "perfect likenesses can be taken in a few seconds."

The Reverend Jesse Head, who would someday win himself a place in history as the preacher who married Abraham Lincoln's parents, and Porter Clay, Henry's brother, were said to be the best cabinetmakers in the new country. The "high finish" which they gave "to native cherry lumber precludes the regret that mahogany is not to be had but at an immense cost."

Several religious denominations were now strong enough to erect houses of worship, and the Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Catholics had church buildings sufficiently attractive to excite the comment of early travelers.

At the several bookstores the best and latest offerings by eastern publishers could be had at "Philadelphia retail prices."

A Main Street shop sold Clark's *Ovid*, Cicero's *Orations*, Scott's *Dictionary*, Watts' *Psalms & Hymns*, Davidson's *Virgil*, Buckanan's *Domestic Medicines*. Mr. Mullanphy on Cross Street (later Broadway) announced a new stock soon to arrive which would contain many volumes on "law, physics, divinity, history, novels, plays, German and French chapbooks, together with the latest music for flute and violin."

The growth of the public library, organized in 1795, now made it necessary to move into more commodious quarters, where it enjoyed the solid support of the town's leading citizens.

One of the earliest schools was the Lexington Grammar School, established by Isaac Wilson of "Philadelphia College," who was described by the wife of a prominent citizen as a "poor, simple-looking Simon," but a person with whom she was "thoroughly satisfied" as a teacher for her two young sons. Several girls' schools, including one for "little Misses," who were taught "reading and needle work," were well attended. Waldemare Mentelle, of whom more will appear hereafter, had "lately removed to the town of Lexington, where he proposes, with the assistance of his wife, to teach young people French language and dancing."

Transylvania Seminary, the struggling little Presbyterian school originally located in the house of its headmaster, now chartered as Transylvania University, had moved to a substantial brick building of eight rooms. Dr. Samuel Brown, graduate of Edinburgh, noted physician and teacher of medicine, uncle of the little girl who would one day be Mary Todd Lincoln's stepmother, was organizing the university's medical department. Dr. Brown, schooled in the "prophylactic use of the cow-pox," had already vaccinated more than 500 persons before the skeptical physicians of New York and Philadelphia would undertake the experiment.⁷

However, the noted French traveler, François A. Michaux, made rather caustic observations on the "budding metropolis" when he visited Lexington in 1802. "They are nearly all natives of Virginia," said he. "With them, the passion for

gaming and spirituous liquors is carried to excess, which frequently terminates in quarrels, degrading to human nature. The public houses are always crowded, more especially during the sittings of the courts of justice. Horses and lawsuits comprise the usual topic of their conversation. If a traveler happens to pass by, his horse is appreciated, if he stops he is presented with a glass of whiskey." But Michaux also noted that the homes of the Kentuckians were neat, the women "very attentive to their domestic concerns," Sundays scrupulously observed, and the children "kept punctually at school."⁸

The criticism of the Frenchman was no doubt substantially correct, certainly so as to the early practice of gaming in Lexington, which largely consisted of wagering on horse races and card playing. The "ancient and honorable" rites of the card table were the amusement of tavern loungers, travelers, and the best citizens alike. Even the dignified and respected John Bradford, editor of the *Gazette*, and the Honorable Henry Clay, gallant "Harry of the West," were not immune from this intriguing diversion in which the desire to win exceeded the mere love of pecuniary gain.

One morning these two gentlemen met each other on the street. Luck had deserted Bradford the previous evening, and the turn of the last card had made him debtor to Clay in the sum of \$40,000.

"Clay," said Bradford, "what are you going to do about that money you won last night? My entire property, you know, won't pay the half of it."

"Oh, give me your note for five hundred dollars," said Clay nonchalantly, "and let the balance go." The note was promptly executed, and a few nights later chance frowned on Clay, and he lost \$60,000 to Bradford. Next day the same conversation ensued as before, except the situation was reversed, and Bradford quickly dismissed the matter saying: "Oh, give me back that note I gave you the other day for five hundred dollars, and we'll call it square."⁹

It was not many years, however, before the citizen of Lex-

ington could find other ways to spend his leisure. Early in the first decade of the new century a theater was built, and whatever itinerant troupes lacked in dramatic art was made up in range of repertoire. Playgoers of Lexington were treated to everything from *Macbeth* to the farce, *Matrimony, or the Happy Imprisonment*. The first menageries visited the town when permission was given Thomas Adron to "shew his lyon" on the public square and the *Gazette* advertised the exhibition of a "living elephant." "Perhaps the present generation may never have the opportunity of seeing a living elephant again," said Bradford editorially.

Wax figure exhibits, usually held in the ballroom of the local tavern at which the exhibitor stopped, were infrequent but popular sources of amusement. These figures depicted tragedies, famous personages, and great historical events. The killing of Alexander Hamilton by Aaron Burr had deeply aroused the Western Country, and the first waxworks which opened in Lexington, while Colonel Burr was then on his way to Kentucky, contained a graphic reproduction of the famous duel.¹⁰ Conspicuously elevated on a platform the images of Colonel Hamilton and Colonel Burr glared stolidly at each other over their long leveled pistols, and a card pinned to the latter's coattails bore a vivid, if inaccurate, description of the encounter:

Oh, Aaron Burr, what hast thou done?
Thou hast shooted dead great Hamilton.
You got behind a bunch of thistle
And shot him dead with a big hoss-pistol.

A few weeks later, when Colonel Burr and his attendant rode up to Wilson's Tavern at the end of a journey on horseback from the "unhealthy and inconsiderable" village of Louisville,¹¹ a small boy recognized him from the likeness he had seen at the waxworks and excitedly notified the proprietor of the celebrity's arrival. After a journey south, Burr returned to Lexington, where he remained for some time in consultation

with Harman Blennerhasset and others, and here, as it was later charged, Burr laid some of his deepest plans for the establishment of a western empire.

He was still in town when Colonel Joseph Hamilton Daviess, United States district attorney, filed charges of treason against him, which were finally dismissed, in the midst of much popular excitement, on motion of his counsel, Henry Clay. When Colonel Burr was again arraigned for treason at Richmond, Virginia, Lexington was still hotly divided upon the question of the defendant's guilt, and the chief witness for the prosecution was James Wilkinson, commanding general of the United States Army, an early citizen of Lexington and first captain of her famous light infantry company.

The Burr-Wilkinson controversy, however, was finally overshadowed and forgotten as the storm clouds of war with Great Britain appeared in the distance. On June 22, 1807, the British warship *Leopard* bombarded the American frigate *Chesapeake*, its deck uncleared, into surrender, and the Western Country flamed with indignation. From that day on, the Lexington press never ceased to advocate war on England.¹² It was firmly believed that British influence lay behind the Indian excursions that now began to spring up, and hostilities had actually begun on the frontier many months before the formal declaration of war. Early in November, 1811, Colonel Daviess left Lexington with a company of volunteers to join General William H. Harrison against the Indians on the upper Wabash, and on the morning of November 7 at the battle of Tippecanoe, Lexington suffered her first casualties of the War of 1812. Colonel Daviess fell mortally wounded at the head of his troops with three bullets in his breast.¹³

Lexington's own peerless Harry of the West with fiery eloquence was leading the impetuous youth of the nation to a militant resentment of long-suffered foreign aggression, and when on Friday, June 26, 1812, the postrider galloped into town with news that Congress had at last declared war on England, enthusiasm and patriotic ardor swept aside all bounds.

"Cannon were fired, Captain Hart's company of Volunteer Infantry paraded, and joy and gladness beamed upon the countenance of every friend of his country."¹⁴ "News of the Declaration of War," said the *Gazette* four days later, "arrived in this place on Friday last, when there was a firing of cannon and musquetry commenced, and kept up until late in the evening. . . . Houses were illuminated and most decided evidence of approbation of the measures, was everywhere manifested."

Six companies were quickly raised in Lexington and Fayette County. The muster ground swarmed with eager, smooth-cheeked lads and silent, grizzled Indian fighters, anxious to shoulder arms against the hated foe. The editor of the *Gazette* laid down his pen for a rifle and joined Captain Hart's infantrymen as a private.

August 18, 1812, was a gala day in Lexington. Never before had there been so many people in town. Streets were blocked, windows and doors jammed, as the Fifth Regiment of Kentucky Volunteers, with drums beating and colors flying, "marched through town amidst the cheers and acclamations of a vast concourse of their grateful fellow citizens." Refreshments were served at Saunders' Garden, followed by an eloquent and stirring address from Henry Clay, and then the raw but ardent troops adjusted their knapsacks and started on the long march toward the enemy somewhere in the wilderness of the Northwest.

From the beginning of the new year the Kentucky Volunteers, particularly the companies from the Bluegrass, were heavily engaged against motley hordes of savages and British regulars. The months that passed were full of anxiety and suspense for the women back home, though they kept busy with spinning wheel and knitting needle, making supplies for the troops at the front. "Warm linsey clothes, socks, blankets, linen shirts, and shoes will enable our brave militia who have marched away, to think only of the enemy, of battle, of revenge, and of victory," wrote one of them, "and with these the women

of Kentucky, like those of Sparta, will be charming in the eyes of their countrymen and terrible to their enemies.”¹⁵

On February 9, 1813, the *Gazette* announced in leaded columns the ambush and terrible butchery at the River Raisin, where the finest sons of the Bluegrass had fallen by the score. Captain Nathaniel Hart, wounded and captured, had been scalped and murdered by a drunken Indian. Scarcely a home had escaped bereavement, and though inured to peril and bloodshed, the town was plunged into the deepest gloom and sorrow. Grief, however, soon gave way to indignation and a burning desire to avenge the massacre. Marching feet again trod the muster ground to the stirring accompaniment of fife and drum, and campfires blazed in every direction. The venerable Isaac Shelby, first governor of the commonwealth, who had again been called to the executive chair, announced that he would lead the recently organized battalions, and the news that the old Revolutionary hero of Kings Mountain was once more in the saddle caused widespread enthusiasm.

All during the following spring and summer the Kentuckians stalked their ancient enemies through the tangled underbrush of a strange country, forcing the British and their savage allies slowly northward. Resistance, however, was stubborn and there were bloody checks now and then. The disaster at Fort Meigs left many vacant chairs around the firesides of Lexington. But finally there came a bright sunny day in October when the postrider halted his foam-flecked pony at Wilson's Tavern with thrilling news and with "Victory" printed in big letters on his hat.¹⁶

General Harrison had met a small force of British regulars under General Henry A. Proctor and about twelve hundred Indians commanded by their famous chief Tecumseh near the Thames River. At a critical stage of the contest Colonel Richard M. Johnson led his mounted Kentuckians in a wild charge under a galling fire against the British flank, and then dismounting, his force engaged the Indians in a terrific hand-to-hand encounter. This time the blood-curdling war whoops



TRANSYLVANIA UNIVERSITY IN THE
1820's. *From an old print owned
by Transylvania College*

TITLE PAGE OF THE KENTUCKY
PRECEPTOR THAT LINCOLN STUDIED
*From the original in the F. M.
Lebold Collection*

THE
KENTUCKY PRECEPTOR,

CONTAINING

A NUMBER OF USEFUL LESSONS

FOR READING AND SPEAKING.

COMPILED FOR THE USE OF SCHOOLS.

BY A TEACHER.

Delightful task 't to rear the tender thought,
To teach the young idea how to shoot,
To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind,
To breathe the oil of learning's spot, and to fix
The generous purpose in the glowing breast.

THOMPSON

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1812

The Deposition of Thomas Lincoln of full age taken at the State house in Springfield between the hours of eight o'clock in the forenoon and six in the afternoon to be read in evidence in a suit in Chancery in the Illinois Circuit Court wherein Mordicai Lincoln is Complainant and Benjamin Grayson Guardian to the Heirs of John Reed is Defendant

This Deponent being duly sworn Deposeth and saith that
Quest by the Court. Do you know how my father Abraham Lincoln spelt his name

Answer He spelt his name "Abraham Lincoln"

Question by the same. Do you know ^{who} is the said Abraham Lincoln His at Law

Answer Mordicai Lincoln the Complainant in the above suit is his eldest son and His at Law

Question by the same. Are you acquainted with Abraham Lincoln's hand writing.

Answer I am having lived near him and seen his writing often

Question by the same Do you believe the Signature to an Assignment on a Treasury Warrant of 22^d Feb Anns N^o 14487 to John Reed Nov 24th 1783 wherein it is spelt Abraham Linhorn is the signature of the said Abraham Lincoln

Answer I have examined the Signature this day

were lost in frenzied shouts of "Remember the Raisin." Colonel Johnson, with five bullets in his body, his white horse smeared with gore from fifteen wounds, had slain the great Tecumseh with a bullet from his long, silver-mounted pistol! Most of the British and many Indians had surrendered, and the terror-stricken survivors fled in great disorder.¹⁷

The enthusiasm and rejoicing in Lexington at the news of this victory were boundless, and while cannon roared, the town was illuminated and plans were made for a banquet for Governor Shelby, Colonel Johnson, and other heroes of the battle. American soil was now free from British occupation in the Northwest, and a year later, hostilities were over.

At the close of the war with England, Lexington settled down for a long era of peace and cultural development.¹⁸ A traveler in 1816 was thus deeply impressed by the town and its inhabitants:

The beautiful vale of Town Fork, which in 1797, I saw variegated with corn fields, meadows, and trees [said Judge Brown], had in my absence been covered with stately and elegant buildings—in short, a large and beautiful town had arisen by the creative genius of the West. The log cabins had disappeared, and in their places stood costly brick mansions, well painted and enclosed by fine yards, bespeaking the taste and wealth of their possessors. The leathern pantaloons, the hunting-shirts and leggings had been discarded, for the dress and manners of the inhabitants had entirely changed.

The scenery around Lexington almost equals that of the Elysium of the Ancients. Philadelphia, with all its surrounding beauties, scarcely equals it. The surface resembles the gentle swell of the ocean, when the agitations of a storm have nearly subsided. The roads are very fine and wide. The grazing parks have a peculiar neatness; the charming groves, the small, square and beautiful meadows, and above all, the wide spreading forests of corn waving in grandeur and luxuriance and perfuming the air with its fragrance, combine to render a summer's view of Lexington inexpressibly rich, novel, grand and picturesque.

The site of the town is in a valley, but the declivities are so

gentle that some travelers, not scrupulously accurate, have described it as a plain. Town Fork Creek waters the central parts of the town. . . . Main Street presents to the traveler as much wealth and more beauty than can be found in most of the Atlantic cities. It is about eighty feet wide, level, compactly built, well paved and having foot ways twelve feet wide on each side. . . .

There are two bookstores, and three printing offices, from which are issued as many weekly papers, viz: the *Reporter* and *Kentucky Gazette*, both Republican, and the *Monitor*, Federal, and the only one of that political caste in the State. The inhabitants are as polished, and I regret to add as luxurious as those of Boston, New York and Baltimore, and their assemblies are conducted with as much ease and grace, as in the oldest towns of the Union.¹⁹

The early twenties of the nineteenth century found Lexington a thriving place, noted far and wide for its culture and its educational institutions, and exceedingly proud of its distinguished citizens who had won fame in arts, science, and politics.²⁰

Set in a grove of large forest trees, Transylvania University occupied a spacious, three-storied, brick building containing thirty rooms and surmounted by a tall, ornate cupola. In a short time the first institution of higher learning in the West had become widely known for its able and learned faculty, and the scope and thoroughness of its courses of instruction. The reputation of the university at this period can perhaps be indicated by comparison of its enrollment with schools of recognized study in the East. In March, 1821, Yale College had but thirty-seven more students than Transylvania; Harvard exceeded her by only four; while Union, Dartmouth, and Princeton were considerably outnumbered.²¹

No traveler stopped overnight at Wilson's Tavern without hearing much of the personal history of Dr. Constantine Rafinesque, the early French-American naturalist and botanist; Matthew H. Jouett, artist and pupil of the celebrated Gilbert Stuart; Dr. Horace Holley, the gifted educator, president of Transylvania University; Gideon Shryock, the architect; John Breckinridge, attorney general in the cabinet of Thomas Jef-

ferson; and Henry Clay, speaker of the national House of Representatives, idol of the Whig party, and candidate for President of the United States. And among the younger generation there were those who would also write their names into the pages of the nation's history—some of whom fate had marked for tragic roles.

Down on West Short Street a bright, vivacious little girl with a temperament like an April day romped with her brothers and sisters about the ample grounds of her father's comfortable home. Her grandfather had been one of the party of hunters who gave the town its name that night in June nearly a half-century before. In her veins ran the blood of a long line of sturdy Americans, noted for their courage, character, and high achievements.

Frequently her playmate was a small lad in his first trousers, with black hair, twinkling gray eyes, and a firm, resolute chin. John C. Breckinridge would some day be Vice-President of the United States, a candidate for President against the girl's husband, and would go down, at the zenith of his fame, with the wreck of a lost cause. Two blocks away, a slender, fair-haired youth attended Transylvania. He would come to know these two children very well indeed as the years went by. Though a lad in his sixteenth year, he had been elected by his class to a high place of honor in the closing exercises of the college year. On commencement day those who looked at the program saw that the name of the young man who had just delivered the oration entitled "Friendship" was Jefferson Davis of Mississippi.²²

The following year Washington's birthday was celebrated at the Episcopal church with orations by Robert J. Breckinridge of the Whig Society and by Gustavius A. Henry of the Union Philosophical Society. In the evening, said the *Kentucky Reporter*, "a large party of gentlemen attached to the Philosophical Society dined at Giron's where sumptuous and elegant repasts were served and toasts were drunk with the applause

of the company." President Horace Holley and other members of the Transylvania faculty proposed several of the thirty-six toasts, among them being: "To the health and prosperity of Jefferson Davis, late a student of Transylvania University, now a Cadet at West Point—May he become the pride of our Country and the idol of our Army."²³

The educational advantages of Lexington, however, were not confined to those enrolled in her local institutions. Over in the backwoods of Indiana a tall, gangling, awkward youth in a linsey-woolsey shirt and outgrown buckskin breeches that exposed his sharp blue shinbones pored over a small volume bound in gray boards and entitled the *Kentucky Preceptor*.²⁴ This little book which contained, as stated in its preface, "the most fascinating and instructive historical accounts, dialogues and orations, with the different kinds of reading in prose and verse" had been carefully "compiled for the use of schools" and published at Lexington by Maccoun, Tilford and Company. "The great importance of having proper books put in the hands of the rising generation, at an early period of life," continued the preface, "must be sufficiently evident to every reflecting mind. It is from these that the mind receives, in the most of cases, its *first* and *most lasting* impressions."

Young Abraham Lincoln had obtained this book from Josiah Crawford, a tightfisted neighbor whom the boys derisively called "Old Blue Nose." A short time before he had borrowed Parson Weems' *Life of Washington*, which had been soaked by rain that blew through cracks in the Lincoln cabin. Abe had "pulled fodder" three days in payment for that damaged volume, and now he took special care that nothing should happen to the *Kentucky Preceptor*. Having learned to read, write, and "cipher to the Rule of Three," Lincoln's school days were over, but the choice literature between the covers of the Lexington compilation was an education in itself, and the backwoods boy absorbed it eagerly. Returning to the cabin after a hard day in the fields, he would "snatch a piece of corn-

pone from the cupboard, sit down in a corner, cock his long legs up as high as his head and lose himself in the *Kentucky Preceptor*.”²⁵

“Disguise thyself as thou wilt, still slavery!” began an essay on “Liberty.” “Still thou art a bitter draught, and though thousands in all ages have been made to drink of thee, thou art no less bitter on that account.” Another article, entitled “The Desperate Negro,” told the pathetic story of a faithful slave who cut his own throat to escape a flogging at the hands of his master. The *Preceptor* also related how Demosthenes overcame his defects of speech by “putting pebble stones into his mouth” and speaking to the waves along the seashore; it quoted the burning words of Robert Emmet, the Irish patriot, as he stood condemned to death for treason, the inaugural address of Thomas Jefferson, and the exquisite lines of *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*.

But even as Lincoln practiced the elocution lessons of the *Preceptor* from the stumps of Indiana clearings, the golden age of Lexington was swiftly drawing to a close. The churning wheels of a new invention, the steamboat, had diverted the current of trade to the river towns of Cincinnati and Louisville, toppling the inland metropolis from her pedestal of commercial supremacy. Yet the capital of the Bluegrass with her elegant homes, churches, seminaries, artists, and statesmen, “pervaded by an air of ease and politeness in the social intercourse of the inhabitants which evinced the cultivation of taste and good feeling,” would serenely maintain for many a day unchallenged title to the proud sobriquet: “Athens of the West.”²⁶

The Lincolns of Fayette

IN 1782 Abraham Lincoln, eldest son of "Virginia" John Lincoln, left the old plantation in the Shenandoah Valley to find a new home in the Western Country. With his wife and children, household goods and flintlock rifle, he followed the blood-stained Wilderness Road over the rugged Cumberlands into the rolling, fertile lowlands of Kentucky. Four years later, wrapped in deerskins with a lead slug in his back, the pioneer was laid away in a rude grave on the slope of a little hill near Hughes' Station in Jefferson County.¹

On September 23, 1782, Abraham's youngest brother Thomas married Elizabeth Casner and brought his wife to the paternal roof on Linville Creek. Following the death of "Virginia" John, Thomas conveyed his interest in his father's estate to his brother Jacob for the sum of 560 pounds, giving 100 pounds of the purchase money to his mother, Rebecca Lincoln.² Then he too gathered up his family and set out over the same road that his favorite brother had traveled nine years before.³

It is quite probable that Thomas Lincoln had been greatly impressed by the glowing descriptions of "Kaintuckee" that

Abraham had sent back home. At any rate, on November 14, 1792, he purchased from Lewis Craig 290 acres in Fayette County on the waters of the south fork of Elkhorn Creek in consideration of 400 pounds cash.⁴

Thomas Lincoln chose his new home with discriminating judgment. He did not locate in Jefferson County, as had Abraham, nor in Washington County, where his brother's widow Bathsheba and his nephews, Mordecai, Josiah, and his namesake Thomas, then were living. These counties had thinner soil and a far less attractive topography than the Bluegrass region. The Lewis Craig farm was situated in one of the richest and most inviting spots in all Kentucky, just five miles from the town of Lexington.

During the next fifteen or sixteen years Thomas Lincoln became one of the most prosperous men in the South Elkhorn neighborhood. He owned slaves,⁵ and with this labor under the management of his older sons⁶ he kept the farm in a high state of cultivation, raising corn, tobacco, hemp, and many hogs which he slaughtered and dressed for the market. Lincoln himself seems to have been largely occupied in the operation of a flourishing stillhouse on Elkhorn Creek near a fine spring of clear limestone water where he manufactured an excellent brand of bourbon whisky.⁷ He also had money to lend, and the records of the Fayette Circuit Court between 1803 and 1809 show many suits filed by him against persons who had failed to pay their notes.⁸

The beginning of 1809 presented a sharp contrast in the fortunes of Thomas Lincoln of Fayette County and his nephew Thomas of Hardin County. It was a momentous year for them both, though neither knew it then. The younger man lived on Nolin Creek with his little family in a rude log cabin with a dirt floor and a stick chimney daubed with clay. The thin sterile soil of his rough hill farm yielded hardly more than the barest necessities of life. Yet the head of this humble household was at peace with the world. Nancy Hanks was a good wife; their little daughter Sarah was two years old, and her

presence alone made the bare cabin far from cheerless. The Lincolns were expecting another child in a few weeks and hoping for a son.

The uncle, however, in spite of his Bluegrass farm, his comfortable home, his slaves, and his stillhouse, was an unhappy man. Clouds were gathering rapidly on the horizon of Thomas Lincoln's domestic life. And just twenty-five days before the "child of destiny" arrived at the Nolin Creek cabin, the storm broke on South Elkhorn. On that day Lincoln executed a deed of trust to his son-in-law, John O'Nan, and his wife Elizabeth which recited that "divers controversies has arisen between Thomas Lincoln and Elizabeth in so much that the said Elizabeth hath come to a final determination to reside with her husband no longer," and he conveyed for her benefit his livestock, household furniture, and other personal property including "one negro man named Major, one negro girl named Charlotte and one negro boy named Moses; one brown horse and saddle and bridle and a brindle cow that gives milk."⁹ By the same instrument Elizabeth "releases the said Thomas Lincoln from any further support in as full and compleat a manner as she is authorized by law to do."¹⁰ At the same time, Lincoln deeded his farm to his eight children, reserving a life estate to himself.¹¹

But before the summer was over, the family troubles seem to have been adjusted. On August 15, 1809, Lincoln signed a contract with his wife, who was then living in Shelby County with her daughter, Margaret O'Nan, and another son-in-law, David Rice, which provided "that said Thomas covenants and agrees with said Elizabeth and David that he the said Thomas will receive the said Elizabeth into his family and treat her kindly and provide for her and the children and in case he should fail to treat his wife Elizabeth as a wife ought to be treated, said Thomas agrees to depart from the family estate or farm and take nothing but a horse, saddle & bridle and all his clothes leaving the rest of the estate to his wife & children

and never to return, unless by consent of said Elizabeth and David to said farm.”¹²

The reconciliation, however, was short-lived, and on March 31, 1810, Lincoln filed a suit in the Fayette Circuit Court to set aside the deed of conveyance which he had made to his wife and children. His bill of complaint contained a long recital of marital woe. He said that by “Forty years of hard labour” he had accumulated an estate worth several thousand pounds and “until his mind became distracted by the unhappy chain of differences with his said wife few men laboured harder & lived more honestly than himself”; that “he loves and desires his said wife & with truth can say that whatever of his conduct towards her that may have savoured of either injustice or cruelty has proceeded either from a deranged mind or casual intemperance & intoxication, and while he, with the deepest contrition and remorse laments & acknowledges those errors of his own life, it has been the misfortune of his wife to have her errors also.”

He alleged further that the deed of trust was obtained from him when he was sick and that the “defts. Elizabeth and Abraham tore him out of his bed, his wife demanded the deed and actually approached to strike him with a chair & was about to strike him when plaintiff repeled the blow by striking her, when the said defendant, Abraham, the son, ordered plaintiff for a damned old rascal to strip himself & in the most beastly and barbarous manner beat plaintiff until he was satisfied.” He also averred that his son-in-law, Rice, had converted to his own use “about 20 barrels of plaintiff’s pork & that the deft. Abraham has taken and converted to his own use between 400 & 500 gallons of whisky.”¹³

The answers of Elizabeth Lincoln, her son Abraham, and her sons-in-law, David Rice and John O’Nan, were filed in Fayette Circuit Court on September 18, 1810.

Defts. say that they deny that part of the bill which charges said settlement deeds to have been done through the machinations

of any one, and that the truth really is and was that these settlement deeds resulted from a most infamous and fraudulent project of the plaintiff to get clear of his wife—to be divorced with a view to getting married again to a young woman. To which end he applied to the Assembly without delay and as soon as he failed there he became excessively embarrassed to make up the difference again with his wife. . . . Thereupon the said Elizabeth came back and agreed to live with plff which she hath ever since done as a good and true wife, but the plff hath never since that period attended to anything about his house or place, and hath been very abusive to the deft, Elizabeth, & has twice kicked her with his feet & once thrown a chair at her & gives her very repeatedly the most abusive language. . . . Deft. Abraham, saith that it is wholly untrue that he did the violence to the plff which he states but the true reason of the plff's violence toward him is his defense of his mother's person & property from the plaintiff's hand, who desires it to dissipate away to the impoverishment of his wife and children.

On Thursday morning, December 13, 1810, the litigants met in the low-beamed parlor of John Keiser's Indian Queen Tavern in Lexington to take the depositions of witnesses for the defendants. At one end of the long pine table brought in from the taproom sat Thomas Lincoln with his attorney, Robert Wickliffe, one of the ablest land lawyers in the West, whose lofty stature and courtly manners made him widely known in later years as the "Old Duke."

At the other end of the table sat Elizabeth Lincoln, her son Abraham, and her sons-in-law, John O'Nan and David Rice. They also were represented by distinguished counsel, Colonel Joseph Hamilton Daviess, noted Indian fighter, prosecutor of Aaron Burr, the first western lawyer to appear before the Supreme Court of the United States, and the brother-in-law of Chief Justice John Marshall. Between the parties, near the center of the table, sat the presiding justices, William Worley and John Bradford, editor and publisher of the *Kentucky Gazette*. Across from them stood a high-backed hickory chair with a cornhusk bottom for the witnesses.

The first witness introduced for the defendants was Peter

Warfield. He was a tenant, he said, on Lincoln's farm and lived within a quarter of a mile of his house. From his personal observation the complainant's recent conduct toward his wife had not been "that of a kind and affectionate husband."

COLONEL DAVIESS: Is the complainant the aggressor when disputes have arisen between himself and wife?

WITNESS: Most generally he is.

COLONEL DAVIESS: During last winter, while the wife of the complainant was preparing to commence distilling, did not the complainant secret the caps & cocks of the still for the purpose of preventing her doing so?

WITNESS: It is my opinion that he did hide them, as he very readily found them when he wished to do so.

MR. WICKLIFFE: Is not Mrs. Lincoln in the habit of frequent intoxication?

WITNESS: I have frequently seen her in that state since I became a tenant of her husband.

MR. WICKLIFFE: Have you not heard the complainant's wife make use of very gross vulgar language to the complainant during their quarrels?

WITNESS: I have.¹⁴

COLONEL DAVIESS: Is it not generally believed in the neighborhood that Mrs. Lincoln's intemperance proceeded from the bad conduct of her husband?

WITNESS: I believe it is.¹⁵

A youth by the name of James Fleming was next called by the defendants, and after being sworn, stated that "in the month of May or June, 1809, this deponent was harrowing corn for the complainant, when he asked this deponent if he prepared poison for his wife whether he would give it to her and said that if he would, he would give him the best horse on his farm, which proposition this deponent rejected."

MR. WICKLIFFE: How long has it been since you first mentioned this circumstance?

WITNESS: About six months ago.

MR. WICKLIFFE: Was there any previous conversation which led to this proposition?

WITNESS: There was not.

COLONEL DAVIESS: Was the complainant in a state of intoxication when he made you this proposition?

WITNESS: No, he appeared perfectly sober.¹⁶

Further interrogation showed that young Fleming was living at Peter Warfield's house, and it was insinuated by Lincoln's counsel that Warfield had influenced the boy's testimony.

It is evident from the papers in the case that the tenant, Peter Warfield, was one of the "evilly disposed persons" referred to in Lincoln's bill of complaint, and that he held Warfield responsible for the circulation of the story that he had attempted to bribe the Fleming boy to poison Mrs. Lincoln. Thomas Lincoln was no longer a young man, and doubtless his once robust physique was somewhat shattered by dissipation, but like all the Lincolns he did not lack personal courage, nor was he averse to a fight when aroused. The testimony taken that morning in the parlor of the Indian Queen must have enraged him intensely, for when the taking of the depositions had been adjourned, he promptly laid violent hands upon the luckless Peter and gave him a most terrific thrashing.

The office of the high sheriff was only three blocks away and the town watchhouse even closer, but Warfield did not have his assailant arrested. On the contrary, he went home and, having sufficiently recovered, came to town next morning and filed suit against Lincoln for assault and battery, alleging in his petition that on the previous day Thomas Lincoln did "with fists and feet commit an assault upon the said plaintiff & him, the said plff, then & there did beat, wound & evily treat so that his life was despaired of greatly."¹⁷

The litigation between the Lincolns dragged along until June 13, 1811, when an order was entered which recited that "The parties having agreed, it is ordered that this suit be dismissed."¹⁸ Evidently the termination of the suit was hastened by the fact that Colonel Daviess, counsel for defendants, was leaving that day with his regiment to join General Harrison in his campaign against the Indians on the Wabash.

The record is silent as to the terms of the settlement, but there is good reason to believe that the case did not end favorably to Thomas Lincoln. Certainly he never regained his former prosperity or much, if any, of his property. On the contrary, he seems to have gone steadily down to utter insolvency, and perhaps poverty, during the years that followed.¹⁹

Only once more before his death did the name of Thomas Lincoln appear in the public records. Nearly a year after the end of the Fayette County litigation in which he was so disastrously involved, Thomas was called as a witness on May 19, 1812, to identify the signature of his deceased brother, Captain Abraham Lincoln.

Mordecai Lincoln, the captain's son, had brought a suit in the Nelson Circuit Court against Benjamin Grayson, guardian for the heirs of John Reed, alleging that Abraham Lincoln in the year 1783 had procured a warrant for 2,268 acres of land "at the lower end of the first Narrows below the first Buffalo crossing above the mouth of Bear Creek" and running down to Green River; that it was agreed between Lincoln and Reed that the latter should receive half the land for locating and surveying it, but that Reed had forged Lincoln's name to the assignment—spelling it, however, "Linkhorn"—and had then "fraudulently claimed all of it as his own."

During the taking of his deposition at the statehouse in Frankfort, Thomas Lincoln was asked by Mordecai: "Do you know how my father Abraham Lincoln spelt his name?" To which the witness replied: "He spelt it Abraham Lincoln."

"Are you acquainted with Abraham Lincoln's handwriting?" asked Mordecai.

"I am," replied Thomas, "having lived near him and seeing his writing often." The witness was then shown the questioned signature on the Reed document, and he emphatically declared it to be a forgery.²⁰

Peter Warfield did not press his action for assault and battery, and having found a more peaceful place of abode beyond the pale of Thomas Lincoln's wrath and the jurisdiction of the

court, he let the case be dismissed.²¹ "I had a very teageous journey," writes Warfield from St. Genevieve, Louisiana, "I was six weeks on the road but feal myself purfectly satisfyde with the cuntry."²²

Thus, the dust-stained archives of the Fayette Circuit Court through a tragic, long-forgotten litigation reveal glimpses of Thomas Lincoln more intimate and personal than has ever been known of any other Lincoln except the President himself. But the cause of the trouble which brought ruin to the once happy household on South Elkhorn will remain unknown. Whether Thomas Lincoln finally succumbed to the nagging of a shrewish spouse, or fell an unwilling victim to the wiles of some rural vampire, or deliberately in his old age wandered away from the domestic rooftree in search of adventure, cannot now be ascertained. It is probable, however, that mutual indulgence to excess in the mellow juice of Kentucky corn was a vital factor in the marital unhappiness of Thomas and Elizabeth Lincoln.

The exact date of Thomas Lincoln's death is uncertain, though it occurred sometime during 1820. He was living on January 21 when Harbin Moore wrote his attorney and complained of "old Lincoln keeping himself concealed for eighteen months."²³ But on December 11 commissioners were appointed to divide among his children the land conveyed by the deed of trust, and the order recited that Thomas Lincoln was deceased.²⁴

In a few years the Lincolns disappeared from Fayette County, and the court records indicate the removal of some of them to Missouri. Wherever they went, they now sank out of sight like all the rest of Abraham Lincoln's collateral relatives, never to make themselves known to their great kinsman in the tragic years of his fame.²⁵

The Early Todds

AMONG the party of woodsmen who founded Lexington was Levi Todd, a stalwart Pennsylvanian just recently arrived in Kentucky.¹ He and his two older brothers, John and Robert, were the sons of David Todd of Providence Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. They had been educated in Virginia at the school of their uncle, the Reverend John Todd, who later obtained from the state legislature the charter for Transylvania Seminary and gave it the first library brought to Kentucky.²

Levi, John, and Robert had embarked upon the study of law, but dry parchment and musty tomes were not for them. Their ancestors were stubborn, restless Scottish Covenanters who had fiercely opposed the Duke of Monmouth at Bothwell Bridge and in defiance of the Established Church of England had fled their native heath for the north of Ireland and thence to America. The "Dark and Bloody Ground," the land of adventure, romance, and opportunity, lay beyond the hazy Alleghenies, and in 1775 the three Todd brothers bade farewell to the Old Dominion and journeyed westward over the tomahawk-blazed Wilderness Road.

Levi Todd went directly to Harrodsburg but soon joined the defenders of the fort at St. Asaph's in Lincoln County. Here he married Jane Briggs on February 25, 1779. Later he founded Todd's Station and became the clerk of the first court held in the Western Country.³ In 1780 he moved to Lexington, purchased property at the first sale of town lots, and was appointed the first clerk of the Fayette County Court, which office he held until his death many years later.

Like his two brothers, Levi Todd took an active part in the military operations of the pioneers. He was a lieutenant under General Clark in his expedition against Kaskaskia and Vincennes, and participated in several retaliatory excursions against the Indians in the Northwest Territory. In the thickest of the ill-fated fight at Blue Licks, he was one of the few officers to survive the battle. Later he succeeded Colonel Daniel Boone in command of the Kentucky militia with the rank of major general.⁴

General Todd was deeply interested in every enterprise that went to the development of Lexington and the new commonwealth, and for many years he was a member of the board of trustees of Transylvania University.⁵ "Ellerslie," his elegant country estate situated on the Richmond Pike just beyond "Ashland," the home of Henry Clay, was one of the show places around Lexington, and here he reared a family of eleven children.

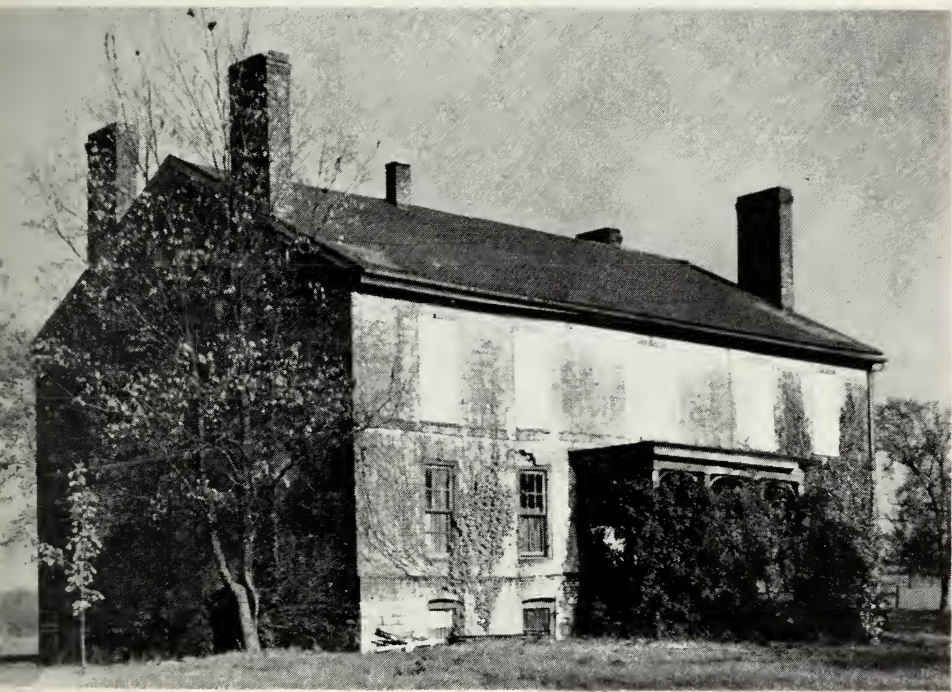
Robert Smith Todd, the seventh child, was born February 25, 1791.⁶ He was brought up from the time he could read and write in the office of the Fayette County clerk and entered Transylvania at the early age of fourteen. According to Dr. James Blythe, the president, he studied "Mathematics, Geography, Rhetoric, Logic, Natural & Moral Philosophy, Astronomy, perfected himself in the Latin language, made considerable progress in the Greek & history & conducted himself in a becoming & praiseworthy manner."⁷

By the time Robert S. Todd left college he was nearly six feet in height, erect and graceful in manner, with brown hair and eyes and a ruddy complexion. He immediately entered



THOMAS LINCOLN'S STILLHOUSE NEAR LEXINGTON

Photograph taken by the author



"ELLERSLIE," HOME OF LEVI TODD, AS IT LOOKED JUST BEFORE IT WAS RAZED



ROBERT S. TODD
*From an original oil portrait
owned by the author*

the office of Thomas Bodley, clerk of the Fayette Circuit Court, where, said Bodley, he "supported a fair and unblemished character, remarkable for his industry, integrity and correct deportment."⁸ In addition to his clerical duties he studied law under the tutelage of George M. Bibb, chief justice of the Kentucky Court of Appeals, United States senator, and secretary of the treasury under President Tyler, and on September 28, 1811, he was admitted to the bar.⁹

It is possible that the young lawyer hung out his shingle for a brief period in Lexington, but if he did, there is no record of it. In any event he kept his job with Bodley, and he had good reason to do so. He was more than absorbed in wooing seventeen-year-old Eliza Parker, and if he should be so fortunate as to win her, he must save enough from his earnings in the clerk's office to sustain them over the lean years which confronted every fledgling barrister.

The Parkers were among the most substantial people of the town. Major Robert Parker, an officer in the Revolution and first cousin of Levi Todd, had in March, 1789, married Elizabeth R. Porter, eldest daughter of General Andrew Porter, a friend of General Washington and veteran of the battles of Trenton, Princeton, Brandywine, and Germantown. Immediately following the wedding the young soldier and his bride had set out on horseback from Pennsylvania over the mountains to Lexington, where they arrived in May.¹⁰

Major Parker was the first surveyor of Fayette County, the clerk of the first board of trustees of Lexington, and according to tradition he erected the first brick residence in the town. When on March 4, 1800, Major Parker died at his country seat in Fayette County, the *Gazette* described him as "an early adventurer to Kentucky—of extensive acquaintance—and universally esteemed."¹¹

Under the terms of Major Parker's will his widow and children were left a comfortable fortune consisting of town lots, farmlands, slaves, and personal property. The whole of the estate was devised to Mrs. Parker during her life, with only one injunction: "It is my sincere will and desire," wrote

the testator a few hours before his death, "that all my children shall be carefully brought up and well educated."¹²

In 1811 the Widow Parker lived in a rather imposing house on West Short Street, and her children attended the best schools in Kentucky. Her daughter Eliza was sprightly and attractive, with a placid, sunny disposition, a sharp contrast to her impetuous, high-strung cousin, Robert S. Todd.

The courtship was progressing in a manner highly satisfactory to all concerned, when suddenly there came the rattle of "musquetry" and the booming of cannon as the delighted inhabitants of Lexington greeted the declaration of war against Great Britain. The thrill of combat from a long line of fighting ancestors ran through the veins of both the young deputy clerk and his sweetheart. Although barely twenty-one, Todd was already captain of a local company of raw militiamen, and now he eagerly began to prepare them for immediate service.¹³ However, on finding that the quota of Nathaniel Hart's veteran organization was yet unfilled, Captain Todd promptly disbanded his own company and enlisted with his men in the Lexington Light Infantry, a proud military outfit that dated back to the time of "Mad Anthony" Wayne.¹⁴

In a few weeks the Fifth Kentucky Regiment was ready to start for the general rendezvous at Georgetown, and on that memorable day in August, 1812, as the "Old Infantry," resplendent in "brilliant uniforms of blue, with red facings, bell-buttons and jaunty red cockades floating from their black hats," marched down Short Street, Eliza Parker waved a brave goodbye to Private Todd from the side porch of her mother's house.

From Georgetown the Kentucky troops marched rapidly northward through a continual downpour of rain, and as the Old Infantry reached Newport, Robert S. Todd was stricken with pneumonia. For several weeks he lay dangerously ill in a rude shack on the low, marshy campground along the Ohio River, and when the regiment pushed on, Todd was left behind under the care of his brother Samuel, who after a few weeks brought him back home to Lexington.

Recuperating quickly, the young soldier soon began to think of his comrades now slowly plodding in quest of the enemy through unbroken forests toward the Great Lakes. Every issue of the *Reporter* and the *Gazette* contained accounts of their hardships and adventures, until Todd, now fully recovered, found that he could no longer remain at home while the companions of his boyhood braved the perils of approaching winter in a wilderness infested by a treacherous foe. Plucky Eliza Parker was again willing that he should go. Moreover, she was willing to become his wife before he went, and on November 26, 1812, at the home of the Widow Parker, Eliza was married to Private Robert S. Todd of the Fifth Regiment, Kentucky Volunteers.¹⁵ On the following day the young husband kissed his bride good-by and with his brother Sam rode off to join their comrades of the Old Infantry encamped in sleet and snow at the rapids of the Maumee.

Crossing swollen, icebound streams and struggling through snowdrifts, the two brothers arrived at Fort Defiance just in time to join the detachment of Kentucky troops commanded by Colonel Lewis in a relief expedition against Frenchtown on the River Raisin, and they were in the thickest of that ghastly encounter with Proctor and his Indians.¹⁶ The red and blue uniforms of Captain Hart's Lexington boys were conspicuous targets for savage rifles, and when the massacre was over, Captain Hart and half of his company lay dead and tomahawked in the snow.¹⁷ Sam Todd and another brother John were both wounded and captured.¹⁸ John ran the gauntlet and escaped, but Sam was adopted into a tribe and remained captive for more than a year before he was ransomed for a barrel of whisky.

Robert S. Todd went through the horrible experience unscathed. Before the year of 1813 was over, he returned to Lexington, where he and his young wife went to housekeeping in a comfortable dwelling which he erected on a lot belonging to the Parker estate, adjoining his mother-in-law on Short Street.¹⁹

The Little Trader from Hickman Creek

ON AN early autumn day in 1801 Samuel Offutt of Frederick County, Maryland, drove his yoke of oxen, hitched to a sturdy wagon with solid wooden wheels, over the Wilderness Road into the Bluegrass region of Kentucky. With him were his wife Elizabeth, his sons, Tilghman, Otho, Resin, Samuel, and Denton, and his two daughters, Eleanor and Arah. Two more sons, Azra and Zedekiah, and a daughter, Sarah, would be born in the Western Country.¹

The Offutts of Frederick and Prince George counties, Maryland, had been people of means and prominence since early colonial days. Samuel's great-great-grandfather, William Offutt, had owned large plantations in Prince George County, including "Clewerwell," "Neighborhood," "Gleaning," and "Calverton Ridge." Before leaving Maryland, Samuel had disposed of a considerable estate willed him by his father, William Offutt the Third.

Shortly after his arrival in Kentucky, Samuel acquired a large tract of rolling, fertile land eight miles southeast of Lexington on the waters of Hickman Creek. Here he erected a comfortable two-story residence of hewn logs with an elaborate

hand-carved double front doorway of wild cherry. The house was weatherboarded, with a wide wing on the side nearest the creek and a long ell in the rear.

Samuel furnished his new home with many heirlooms which he had brought with him over the Wilderness Road on his several trips from Maryland to Kentucky—four-posters, a tall mahogany grandfather clock, Windsor chairs, tables, chests, cupboards, mirrors, sideboards, gold-edged chinaware, coin silver forks, spoons and ladles, an elegant tea service, Irish linens, and all sorts of cooking utensils.²

For many generations the Offutt family had been breeders of fine horses, and it was not long before Samuel had one of the best stock farms in the Bluegrass. In addition to horses he raised mules, sheep, cattle, and hogs, sending large cargoes of livestock each year down the Ohio and Mississippi to Natchez and New Orleans. He owned slaves and occasionally hired out his surplus labor, but there is no record of any sale of his Negroes.³ He also had money to loan, and if debtors who could pay refused to do so, he sued them with an alacrity which induced one hapless defendant to denounce him, but without avail, as "a gripping, mercenary character."⁴

Offutt was a man whose education was above the average in central Kentucky. He wrote a good hand, kept his accounts neatly, figured accurately. A firm advocate of schools, he built a schoolhouse on his own land fronting the Bates Creek Pike for the benefit of his own children and those of other families of the neighborhood.

At this time his son Tilghman had married and now lived in Logan County, Kentucky, and his daughters, Eleanor and Arah, also had found husbands and had moved to homes of their own. The other Offutt boys—Otho, Resin, Samuel, Denton, and, later, Azra—attended school—all of them regularly except Denton. Intelligent, industrious, imaginative, ambitious, Denton was almost from infancy a typical "young man in a hurry." For him "book learning" was indeed a waste of time. He intended to go into business—to make money—to be rich some day. Some of the outstanding citizens in Lexing-

ton who had reached the pinnacle of success in trade and finance could hardly read or write! Even in law and statesmanship, look at Mr. Clay who had received but little formal education!

In winter young Denton, besides running his own trap lines, hung around Chrisman's mill, especially in January when "hides" were "prime," buying mink and otter skins from other farm boys in the community. In spring and summer he helped his father prepare livestock for market. Even in early youth his amazing influence over animals was a subject of wide comment. He could handle with the greatest ease—quietly and gently—the wildest horse or the most obstinate mule.

Yet for all his scorn of schooling Denton was a worshiper of brains, and his hero was his younger brother Azra, who loved books, became a student at Transylvania, and graduated from its famous College of Medicine in the class of 1826. He boasted about Azra. Nobody had ever read so fine a piece as his thesis: "The Trephining in Injuries of the Head."⁵ Azra, declared Denton, would some day be the greatest physician and surgeon in the United States!

Brother Tilghman's horse breeding, training, and general livestock business prospered greatly in Logan County. By the early twenties he was far on his way to what he actually became a few years later—the largest taxpayer in that part of the state. Every spring he came to the Bluegrass and bought fine brood mares to breed to his stallions, especially his great trotting sire "Hamiltonian."⁶ In October of each year Denton and Tilghman's son Joe—said to have been the very "spit and image," both physically and temperamentally, of his uncle—drove large herds of stock overland to Natchez. In March they took them by flatboat down the flooded waters of Green River to the Ohio and thence to New Orleans.

On January 25, 1827, Samuel Offutt died. "Aged 76 years, and an inhabitant of this state for the last 26 years," said the *Lexington Reporter*.⁷ By the terms of his will he left to his wife Elizabeth his plantation and its equipment and all house-

hold goods for life, all of his slaves not specifically devised to others, and her choice of "four head of horses, four head of cows, twenty head of hogs and twenty head of sheep" from his stock on hand. The testator bequeathed to Resin "one negro man named Harry," to Azra "one negro man named Charles," to Denton "one negro man named George," to Arah "one negro girl named Mary." For the support and education of his grandson, William Offutt Thompson, he bequeathed a "negro girl named Caroline & also a negro boy named Gabriel." The residue of his property he left in equal shares to Otho, Tilghman, Samuel, Resin, Azra, Denton, and Arah.⁸

Several years previously Resin Offutt had set out with a party of adventurous Lexingtonians for the Missouri frontier. Glowing reports had come back of his quick success in trading in furs and horses with the Indians along the Platte River and in shipping cargoes down the river to St. Louis. It is quite evident from the local records that after the death of his father, Denton also determined to seek his fortune in the trading business which was making Resin rich in the West.

On January 19, 1829, Denton sold his one-seventh interest in the home place to his brother Samuel and also disposed of his Negro George, and all other personalty which he had received under the will of his father. By the fall of 1829⁹ he had converted all available resources into cash, which probably amounted to as much as \$2,000, and was ready to seek fame and fortune in a new country. But he left the old home on Hickman Creek with a heavy heart. Having acquired all the interest of the other heirs in his father's plantation, Dr. Azra had married lovely Antoinette Caroline Hale and with his bride moved there to live with his mother. That summer cholera broke out in the neighborhood, and on July 19, 1829, Antoinette, to the great distress of Azra and Denton, had been suddenly stricken with it and had died within a few hours.¹⁰

It is not known just when Denton Offutt arrived in Illinois, nor, indeed, why he went there at all, but he was first heard

from one day in February, 1831, when he stopped at the house of John Hanks in Macon County, near Decatur. It is possible that Offutt had heard of Hanks on some of his river trips with nephew Joe. In any event, he informed Hanks that he understood he had been "quite a flat boatman in Kentucky," and, said Hanks, "he wanted me to run a flat boat for him."¹¹ Hanks was willing to undertake the job and suggested as another member of the crew his young cousin, Abraham Lincoln, recently arrived in Illinois, who also had had flatboat experience while living in Indiana.

"I hunted up Abe," said Hanks, "and introduced him and John D. Johnston, his step-brother, to Offutt. After some talk, we made an engagement with Offutt at 50c a day and \$60.00 to make a trip to New Orleans."¹²

Offutt is described by those who saw him about that time as "a short, rather stockily built man, of good natured, amiable disposition, free handed and of great sociability—a trader and speculator who always had his eyes open to the main chance."¹³

Thus it happened that about the middle of March, 1831, Hanks and Lincoln paddled down the Sangamon River in a canoe to Judy's Ferry, where they met Johnston. Together they walked the five miles into Springfield, where they found their convivial employer entertaining friends at the Buckhorn, the town's leading tavern.

Having been unable to rent a flatboat, Offutt hired them to cut timber on government land and float the logs down the river to Fitzpatrick's mill, where lumber could be sawed to build a craft, eighty feet long and eighteen feet wide. Camping in a "shanty shed," which they had hastily put up, the three men ate Lincoln's cooking, except for the few times when they were invited to the nearby cabin of Caleb Carman. Looking at the tall, gangling youth clad in a short, blue jean coat, trousers that exposed more than eighteen inches of sharp shin-bone, a broad-brimmed hat of buckeye splints perched jauntily on the back of his unruly shock of heavy black hair, Carman

thought he was a "Green horn," though "after a half hour's conversation with him, I found him no Green horn."¹⁴

Books being unavailable, Lincoln participated in the game of seven-up, played of evenings with Hanks and Johnston and others who visited the camp, handling his cards with exceptional skill and entertaining everybody with his droll humor and funny stories.¹⁵ Finally after about six weeks the boat was finished and loaded with barrel pork, corn, and live hogs. Slowly it swung out from the marshy river bank—Skipper Offutt on deck, watching with growing admiration the stalwart, sinewy Lincoln as with mighty sweeps of the huge steering oar he maneuvered the clumsy craft into the current of the muddy Sangamon.

Skipper and crew had proceeded, however, only a few miles when serious trouble overtook them. At a little settlement called New Salem flood waters had receded so that the boat stuck on the milldam and hung there part way over for a day and a night. Most of the cargo, including the hogs, was transferred to another boat. Lincoln then quickly solved what the watching villagers declared to be an insurmountable difficulty by borrowing a large auger and boring holes in the end of the vessel that projected over the dam. When the water that had leaked in ran out, the holes were plugged, barrels of pork pushed forward, and the boat then lurched over the dam with a resounding splash. Profoundly impressed by this exhibition of his new boathand's ingenuity, glowing with admiration at this fresh evidence of Lincoln's talents, Offutt declared to the crowd on the bank that he intended to build a steamboat especially to meet the obstacles of the Sangamon. She would have rollers for shoals and dams, runners for snow and ice, and with Lincoln as her captain "by thunder she'll have to go!"¹⁶

Down the river the boatmen went without further mishap into the broader, deeper Illinois, past Beardstown, where people on the shore laughed at the strange-looking craft with sails

of plank and cloth and its grunting, squealing freight, out upon the wide Mississippi, past St. Louis, where John Hanks left them, past Cairo, tying up for a day at Memphis, with brief stops at Vicksburg and Natchez.¹⁷ Then in early May, Offutt and his weather-beaten little crew poled into the busy harbor of New Orleans, where they would remain for a month while the owner leisurely and profitably disposed of his cargo.

One morning, strolling about town, taking in the sights, the men from Illinois came upon a slave auction. A handsome, light mulatto girl stood on the block, while prospective bidders pinched her flesh and otherwise satisfied themselves that the merchandise offered was of the quality proclaimed. For a few minutes they silently watched the revolting scene. Then Lincoln turned away. "By God, boys, let's get away from this," he exclaimed in horror.¹⁸

In June, Offutt and his party boarded a steamboat for St. Louis. By this time a strong attachment existed between Lincoln and his employer. The voluble, energetic, optimistic little Lexingtonian seemed widely traveled, as he talked of Baltimore, Washington, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, and the river towns of the Mississippi. Moreover, Offutt was a devoted follower of Henry Clay, whom Lincoln had so much admired since he first began to read about him in the *Louisville Journal* at Gentryville. Offutt could not remember when he did not know, at least by sight, "Gallant Harry"; and his personal acquaintance with the great man, his oratorical ability and political triumphs, lost nothing in the telling.

Lincoln had completely charmed the little trader. He was in Offutt's opinion the shrewdest, best-read, most resourceful young man he had ever met. In fact, he was as smart and already knew as much about books as brother Azra, which from Denton was a very high compliment indeed. Fun loving, good humored, honest, Lincoln seemed to have all the qualities for a successful merchant, and before the boat arrived at St. Louis, Offutt had employed him to run a store which he intended to open at New Salem just as soon as goods could be

bought and delivered. Offutt got off the packet at St. Louis, where he was to purchase the merchandise and arrange for shipping and hauling it, while Lincoln started on foot for home, 120 miles away. Thomas Lincoln then lived at Buck Grove in Coles County, and Lincoln stayed there with his father for several weeks until it was time to meet his employer.

It was late in July, 1831, when Abraham Lincoln trudged to New Salem. Offutt had not arrived, and Lincoln did not know the reason until later. His mother had died on February 21. Having been notified that his presence was needed in the settlement and division of her estate, he had made a brief trip back to Kentucky.¹⁹ Embarking on his new venture with Lincoln, he could use his share just now to excellent advantage.

He was distressed, however, to find brother Azra still utterly disconsolate over the loss of his lovely Antoinette, dead now two years that month. The doctor could not forget that at the time his wife became ill he was attending several patients suffering from the same malady from which she had died, and he had developed a fixation that he had "brought it home to her." Neglecting his practice, avoiding friends, he would sit for hours at the foot of her grave under the old trees in the orchard at the back of the house.

But beckoning fortune in young, virile, but somnolent Illinois visualized through the rose-tinted glasses of his incorrigible optimism—Offutt, the Merchant Prince of the Sangamon, who would awaken this backwoods giant to a realization of his strength and potentialities—made it impossible to dwell at length even upon family afflictions. Selling his share of his mother's estate to Otho, he hurried back to keep his commitments with the waiting Lincoln.

The store opened about September 1, 1831, in a log cabin at the edge of the bluff above the village mill.²⁰ It was a typical frontier establishment, with dry goods and whisky—liquor in quantity, but not by the drink—as much a part of the store as coffee, tea, sugar, molasses, tobacco, and gunpowder.²¹ In a short time the proprietor found his faith in his young clerk

so fully justified that he rented the mill from Rutledge and Cameron and put Lincoln, with "Slicky" Bill Greene as his assistant, in charge of the "whole shebang."²² Several times each day Lincoln's long legs carried him quickly from store to mill and back to store again.

Meanwhile, the little trader from Hickman Creek was also busy. On his Kentucky saddle horse he rode across the prairies and through the Sangamon bottoms, urging the production of bigger and better crops. Improvement in river transportation afforded an easy, natural outlet. He would prove the Sangamon navigable except, possibly, at the lowest ebb in summer. He would buy all the grain and pork the farmers of the region could raise, process what was needed for their family use at his mill, settle their accounts at his store with part of it, and sell the excess in New Orleans. These were to be first links in a chain of integrated enterprises which eventually would make every participant a man of fortune.

Lincoln found little in frontier life that he had not known before in Indiana. Religion was demonstrative and the use of ardent spirits widely prevalent. Community intercourse was centered about the familiar camp meetings, log rollings, house raisings, and trading excursions to the village on Saturday afternoons.

But the devilry of the Clary's Grove boys added a spice and zest to New Salem atmosphere that Gentryville never had. Wild, reckless, impulsive, yet warmhearted, honest, and truthful—physical courage and strength their ideals of perfect manhood—these young rowdies, largely descendants of Kentuckians who had brought their racing stock and game chickens to the frontier country, were equally ready for fight or frolic.²³ Hostile to strangers whose "nerve" was yet untested, they stood aloof from Lincoln until one sunny afternoon, under the giant oak near Offutt's store, when droll, whimsical destiny summoned him by boastful proclamation of the infatuated little merchant from the Bluegrass.

Lincoln had grown steadily in the exalted esteem of his

employer—both as to physical and mental endowments. In New Salem and up and down the Sangamon valley Offutt extravagantly praised Lincoln's skill as a businessman and his amazing intellectual attainments, proclaimed him to be "the smartest man in the United States," and declared that he could "outrun, outjump, whip or throw down" any man in Sangamon County.²⁴

So it happened that on this particular Saturday afternoon Offutt strutted back and forth in front of his store hailing passers-by with wide sweeps of an arm and a fist full of silver, offering to bet ten dollars on the manly prowess of his protégé. Lincoln was inside the store when it started, but as soon as he heard of it he hurried out and tried to stop his overenthusiastic employer, saying emphatically that he had no desire whatever to engage in any contest of this nature. It was too late, however, because Bill Clary had run out of his saloon next door, accepted the challenge, and named Jack Armstrong, leader of the Clary's Grove boys, as Lincoln's opponent. Armstrong was a big-boned, square-built man of medium height, "strong as an ox," weighing over two hundred pounds, a veteran in frontier "kick, bite and gouge" combat, who had thrown or whipped every man who had wrestled or fought him.²⁵ Lincoln weighed one hundred eighty-five pounds, was six feet four inches tall, cool, self-possessed, deceptively agile, and quick on his large feet.

Everybody in the village seemed to get word of the impending battle at the same time, and all turned out to witness what promised to be a thrilling example of the age-old contest between the lion and the panther. Whooping and "hollering," the Clary's Grove boys formed a circle, offering to wager knives, cash, trinkets, and whisky on their Jack but finding few takers except Offutt, who loudly continued to predict victory for his incomparable clerk, backing him to the limit of his available resources.

The two men, stripped to the waist, crouched, eyed each other, sidled cautiously, clenched, broke, grappled again, tug-

ging, twisting. Armstrong felt the tremendous strength of long, sinewy, rail-mauling arms; Lincoln staggered under the impact of powerful shoulders. Armstrong craftily tried his famous "hip lock," then the devastating "grape vine trip," but to no avail. All the tricks known to the backwoods "rassle" left both men on their feet, but Armstrong finally felt himself fading under the furious pace. Struggling finally to break a headlock, furious with pain and frustration, he now resorted to a maneuver which except in dire extremity he would have scorned. Lunging forward, he stomped the instep of Lincoln's foot with his boot heel, hoping that surprise, if not actual injury, would break the crushing hold that held his head viselike against his adversary's lean, hard body. But the foul backfired most disastrously for Armstrong. Infuriated at such tactics, before Jack could recover his balance Lincoln in a supreme effort lifted him high in the air and with a mighty heave flung him over his head. Hitting the ground flat on his back, Jack lay there shocked and stunned by the heavy fall.

At this moment the Clary's Grove boys, snarling "Kentucky and Irish curses," rushed forward to avenge their dethroned champion; but the defiant Lincoln, with his back against the store wall, dared them to tackle him one at a time and shouted his willingness to fight them all. Just then the vanquished Armstrong, who had a prodigious admiration for courage and brawn, rushed through the milling crowd and grasped Lincoln's hand. "He's the best feller that ever broke into this settlement," he declared.²⁶

Biographers agree that it would be almost impossible to overestimate the importance of this episode in its effect upon Lincoln's later life. In a single hour this penniless and almost friendless youth had acquired an ever-expanding group of stanch, fiercely loyal admirers who would serve him well in the near future and later, as he started upon that amazing political career which would end so tragically in smoke and flags and martyrdom.²⁷

Offutt, of course, was almost beside himself with pride at

the adulation now being showered on his protégé and the inflation of his own self-esteem. He bragged more than ever and let no one forget that recent events had fully verified his most extravagant predictions. But his unclouded happiness was not long to be enjoyed. The November 2, 1831, issue of the *Kentucky Reporter* contained a poignant news item: "On Thursday morning last, Dr. Azra Offutt of Jessamine County put an end to his existence by hanging himself with a rope. He was a very industrious, sober, moral citizen in good circumstances and in the prime of life." The brokenhearted Azra had gone to join his beloved Antoinette under the old trees in the orchard. Denton had lost the man who held first place in his affections, whose intellectual attainments he had admired most until he met Lincoln.

The *Reporter* of December 6 advertised the "Public Sale of the Personal Estate of Dr. Azra Offutt, dec'd."—his Negroes, his horses, cattle, mules and other livestock, his library, including "a handsome assortment of medical books." A postscript to the notice added, "All those who borrowed books belonging to the library of Dr. Offutt are requested to return them before the hour of sale."

Strange as it may now seem, it was Lincoln's ability to read books that astounded so many of his devoted friends. That he could write, too, was almost beyond the bounds of conception. But to Offutt and the few other citizens of New Salem who had known men of intellect, it was the directness and precision of Lincoln's mental processes and his passion for bare facts that impressed them more than anything else. Harvey Ross, the mail carrier, observed this on one occasion and remembered it in old age. He wanted to buy a pair of buckskin gloves and asked Lincoln if he had any that would fit him. "There's a pair of dogskin gloves that I think will fit you," said Lincoln, throwing them on the counter, "and you can have them for seventy-five cents."

Ross was surprised to hear them called "dogskin." He knew

that the women of the neighborhood made all the gloves that were worn in that part of the country from deerskins tanned by the Indians, and that a large, dressed buckskin could be bought for fifty or seventy-five cents.

"How do you know they are dogskin gloves?" inquired the mail carrier.

"Well, Sir," replied Lincoln, who, as Ross thought, was somewhat "rasped" that his word should be questioned, "I'll tell you how I know they are dogskin gloves. Jack Clary's dog killed Tom Watkins' sheep and Tom Watkins' boy killed the dog and old John Mounts tanned the dogskin and Sally Speers made the gloves and that is how I know they are dogskin gloves."

"So, I asked no more questions about the gloves," said Ross, "but paid the six bits and took them . . . and never found a pair that did me the service that those did."²⁸

With the passage of time it became increasingly evident that Lincoln was indeed the popular hero of New Salem and especially of the Clary's Grove boys. He was their representative in all kinds of physical contests with champions from Richland, Indian Point, Sand Ridge, Sugar Grove, and other neighborhoods—running, jumping, lifting, wrestling.

"He could throw down any man that took hold of him," said J. Rowan Herndon. "He could outrun, outjump, outbox the best of them." And Herndon added, "He could beat any of them on anecdote."²⁹

"I have seen him," said Robert B. Rutledge, "frequently take a barrel of whiskey by the chimes and lift it up to his face as if to drink out of the bung-hole, but, I never saw him taste or drink any kind of spirituous liquor."³⁰

Though Lincoln never drank or brawled nor even used tobacco, he never rebuked his roistering companions, nor did he attempt to reform them in any way except, perchance, by force of personal example. Sometimes when he was stretched out reading on the counter, his head propped up with bolts of cotton or calico, a drunken fight would start in the village

Mr James Cuttidge please to pay the
beared David P Nelson thirty dollars
and this shall be your receipt for the
same

March 8th 1832- A Lincoln
for D Offutt

Received of Mrs Barnette in full of all
dues, debts and demands up to this date

March 26 - 1832 - A Lincoln
for D Offutt

Received of William Sampson in full of all
demands up to this day April 21 1832

A Lincoln
for D Offutt.



THE RUTLEDGE MILL (*above*) AND DENTON OFFUTT'S STORE AT NEW SALEM, REBUILT ON THE ORIGINAL SITES. *Herbert Georg Studios, Springfield, Illinois*



street. Lincoln would run out and try to stop it without actual intervention. Failing in this, he would "pitch in," grab the aggressor by the "nap of the neck and seat of the britches," and toss him "ten or twelve feet easily." This, an eyewitness dryly observed, "usually ended the fuss," and Lincoln would quietly return to his book.³¹

So great was Lincoln's reputation for honesty and fair dealing that he was often chosen judge for cock fights, wrestling matches, gander pullings, foot races, and, indeed, as umpire in the settlement of disputes in other matters, and his decisions were accepted without a murmur.

Bap McNabb had a little red rooster and constantly boasted about his fierce prowess in the pit. One afternoon Lincoln refereed a match fight between Bap's fowl and an old ring-wise, battle-scarred cock of terrifying appearance. McNabb with a contemptuous and confident gesture tossed his bird into the pit. Instantly his feathered adversary leaped into the air and with ruffed hackles bore down upon him. The little red rooster with a terrified squawk turned tail, hopped out of the ring, and took to the bushes!

Sadly paying his wager, the chagrined McNabb silently carried his chicken home and threw him down in the barn lot. The little red rooster, now completely out of danger, flew up on the woodpile, strutted proudly back and forth, flapped his wings, and crowed with the most arrogant defiance. Bap looked at him a moment. "Yes, you little cuss," he exclaimed in utter disgust, "you're great on dress parade but not worth a damn in a fight!"³²

Some thirty years later, General McClellan was reviewing a division of infantry on the Potomac Flats, just below the White House. Regimental bands were playing, flags flying, the ranks—splendidly uniformed—stood stiffly at attention as "Little Mac" galloped by on his magnificent black stallion. For months the general had stubbornly resisted all efforts to induce him to move forward against the enemy. From his office window the President watched the martial scene. Then he turned

back to his desk. "Gen. McClellan," he said with a rueful smile, "reminds me of Bap McNabb's rooster."³³

In the spring of 1832 Lincoln's employer realized that his New Salem days were numbered. All his hopes and schemes had been built upon his implicit confidence that the Sangamon River was navigable. Efforts to establish that important fact had flatly failed. Furthermore, New Salem had too many stores; and his, located near the steamboat wharf that was never to be, was farthest from the center of the village, if it must rely on business from the interior.

So one day Denton Offutt, disillusioned and broke, climbed into a farm wagon on the edge of the bluff. Rutledge and Cameron had taken back their mill. Offutt had turned over the store to his creditors. Tradition would say that they sued him and attached his stock of goods, but court records would deny it. He had failed in business, as thousands before him had failed and would fail again and again, but he had bilked nobody. While others had sustained losses in his commercial ventures which, perhaps, had been launched too optimistically, but always in good faith, he had suffered more than any of them, having lost every dollar of his savings and all of his inheritance.

He was glad of one thing—Lincoln was securely in position to forge ahead in the world. He had recently announced for the Illinois legislature as a Whig—a Henry Clay Whig. He was joining the military campaign against Black Hawk, and the Clary's Grove boys were sure to elect him captain of their company. Yet Offutt was sad that some of those who had once so enthusiastically proclaimed him a veritable captain of finance now spoke harshly of him, calling him, in the words of Uncle Jimmy Short, a "wild, reckless, harum scarum kind of a man."³⁴ Lincoln, of course, was not one of these. Indeed, it would have made Offutt happy to know what perhaps he never knew, that in future years, when Lincoln came to write his autobiographical sketch, he would not fail to mention gratefully the name

of the man who first gave him a larger vision of life and confidence in himself.

Slowly, the clumsy old vehicle descended the steep hill, crossed the rickety wooden bridge over Green's rocky branch, and turned, creakily, down the Sangamon valley.³⁵ The little trader from Hickman Creek had left New Salem forever and with it all his dreams of early fame and fortune. Yet unwittingly, as Abraham Lincoln's first sponsor, he had already achieved a modest but inevitable immortality.

Mary Ann Todd

ON DECEMBER 6, 1817, two popular veterans of the War of 1812, Robert S. Todd of Captain Hart's infantry and Sergeant Bird Smith of Captain Trotter's cavalry, announced their partnership in an "Extensive Grocery Establishment" advantageously located on Cheapside. One of the firm, according to the *Gazette*, would attend "Foreign markets by which they will be enabled to supply their customers with every article in their line, on better terms and of better quality—indeed with any articles, such as fruits, *et cetera* that heretofore could not be procured."¹ For the next several years the advertisements of Smith & Todd regularly appeared in the public prints, always listing a full line of high-grade groceries and the choicest, rarest wines, spirits, brandy, gin, and whisky.

Robert S. Todd was now one of the most enterprising and promising young businessmen of Lexington, deeply interested, as were his forebears, in political and civic affairs. He had been chosen clerk of the Kentucky House of Representatives with little or no opposition for two sessions,² and was shortly to take his seat as a member of the Fayette County Court, a

position of some distinction in the community.³ Moreover, Todd was the father of a growing family, which consisted of two daughters—Elizabeth, born November 18, 1813, and Frances, born March 7, 1815—and a son, born June 25, 1817, named Levi for his grandfather. On December 13, 1818, a third daughter arrived at the Short Street residence, and the newcomer was given the name of Mary Ann for Mrs. Todd's only sister.⁴

Two years later another son, Robert Parker, was born, but in the middle of his second summer he died, and Nelson, the old body servant, hitched up the family barouche and, according to a quaint custom of the town, delivered at the doors of his master's friends black-bordered "funeral tickets" which read: "Yourself and family are invited to attend the funeral of Robert P. Todd, infant son of Mr. R. S. Todd, from his residence on Short Street, this evening, at 5 o'clock. Lexington. July 22, 1822."⁵ Little Mary Ann was delighted when a baby sister came in 1824. All the other Todd children were old enough to go to school, and during their absence time hung heavily on Mary's hands until the arrival of Ann Maria.⁶ And now, with two "Anns" in the family, Mary's middle name was dropped from ordinary use to avoid confusion.

Lexington celebrated the Fourth of July, 1825, with much patriotic fervor. Sunrise was ushered in by the ringing of church bells. At four A.M. Captain Pike's company of artillery cadets appeared in the streets as infantry and "after performing evolutions" marched to the lodgings of the city's holiday guest, Major General Winfield Scott, and fired a salute.

Several barbecues were held in the country. At Mr. Cornett's Eagle Tavern, where General Scott, Captain Gale, his aide, and Henry Clay, the new secretary of state, dined, eighteen good stiff Kentucky bourbon toasts were drunk, among them being: "The Memory of Washington"; "'The Union,' the paladium of our political safety and prosperity"; "Henry Clay, Secretary of State: The man resolved & sacred to his trust, inflexible to ill, and obstinately just"; "Our distinguished guest, General Winfield Scott"; "The Ladies of the Western Country—

the rose is not less lovely, nor its fragrance less delightful because it blossoms in the Wilderness." In the afternoon Clay and General Scott joined a large company of ladies and gentlemen at Captain Fowler's Garden, where there was dancing until "a late hour in the evening."⁷

But in the midst of all this celebration the home of Robert S. Todd was dark and quiet, only a single lamp burning low in an upstairs bedroom. Another boy had just been born to Eliza Todd, and death was hovering near the mother. All that day Mary and the other children anxiously watched the house with its closed shutters from their Grandmother Parker's side porch across the lawn. Old Nelson trudged in and out with packages from Graves' drugstore. At bedtime the one-horse gigs of Dr. Ben Dudley and Dr. Elisha Warfield still stood in front of the door, but next morning the doctors were gone, and pillowcases hung on the clothesline in the back yard. On the following day the funeral tickets read: "Yourself and family are respectfully invited to attend the funeral of Mrs. Eliza P., Consort of Robert S. Todd, Esq., from his residence on Short Street, this Evening at 4 o'clock. July 6, 1825."⁸

Thus, at thirty-four years of age, Robert S. Todd was a widower with six small children, the last one, George Rogers Clark, only a few days old. Fortunately, however, he was able to keep his family intact. Ann Maria, his unmarried sister, came to live with them, and this capable young woman cheerfully assumed the management of the household and the care of her brother's motherless children. The faithful Todd slaves, brought up in the family, made the task easier than it would have been otherwise. Jane Saunders was the housekeeper; Chaney, the cook; Nelson, the body servant and coachman, also served the dining room and did the marketing, while old "Mammy Sally" with the young nurse Judy took excellent care of the little Todds.

In January, 1826, the General Assembly convened at Frankfort, and Robert S. Todd was again chosen clerk of the lower house. It was not long before the gay social life of the capital

brought him an introduction to Miss Elizabeth Humphreys, a charming, highly cultured young woman, a member of one of the oldest and most prominent Kentucky families. Two of her uncles, Preston Brown and Samuel Brown, earliest professor of medicine at Transylvania, were physicians widely known throughout the West. Another uncle, John Brown, had been Kentucky's first United States senator, while still another uncle, James Brown, brother-in-law of Mrs. Henry Clay, had represented Louisiana in the Senate, and was later minister to France.

In a few months Robert S. Todd was ardently seeking the hand of pretty Betsy Humphreys, although the numerous relatives of his first wife did not look with favor upon the courtship. This opposition to his remarriage was reflected in one of his letters to Miss Humphreys, who was then visiting in New Orleans:

You have no doubt observed with what avidity and eagerness an occasion of this kind is seized hold of for the purpose of detraction and to gratify personal feelings of ill-will and indeed oftentimes how much mischief is done without any bad motive. May I be permitted to put you on your guard against persons of this description. Not that I would wish to stifle fair enquiry, for I feel in the review of my past life a consciousness that such would not materially affect me in your estimation, although there are many things which I have done and said, I would wish had never been done—and such I presume is the case of every one disposed to be honest with himself. . . . Wealth is sometimes the high road to distinction & honors, but rarely to real happiness; a competency is always necessary for our comfort & happiness in every situation. Did I not believe that I could offer you the latter, I should never have proposed a change of the situation where you now enjoy it—and to effect that object, I have always felt it a duty which I owe to those entrusted to my care and protection, to use the necessary exertion. I am in that situation which the good old book describes as the most desirable: "Not so poor as to be compelled to beg my bread nor so rich as to forget my maker," to the latter part of my quotation, I know I have not paid that regard which my duty required.⁹

By late October, Robert S. Todd and Betsy Humphreys were engaged, and Todd was writing his fiancée: "I hope you will not consider me importunate in again urging upon your consideration the subject of my last letter. I am sure if you knew my situation, you would not hesitate to comply with my wishes in fixing on a day for our marriage in this or the early part of the ensuing week."¹⁰

This was followed a few days later by another note to Miss Humphreys, which read:

Lexington, Oct. 25, 1826.

Dear Betsy:

I received your kind letter of Monday, for which I return you my sincere acknowledgements. Availing myself of the privilege which it seems to give, I hasten to inform you that I will be down on Wednesday next, the 1st day of November. Mr. Crittenden, if unmarried, will be my only attendant. I intend to write to him by this mail. It is now late, & I bid you a pleasant good night. Believe me Dear Betsy, when I subscribe myself

Affectionately yours,

R. S. Todd.¹¹

On Wednesday, November 1, 1826, Robert S. Todd and Betsy Humphreys were married at the historic old home of the bride in Frankfort.¹² Todd's best man was John J. Crittenden, who in spite of his youth had already been speaker of the Kentucky House of Representatives, had served his state in the United States Senate, was later to be twice attorney general of the United States, governor of Kentucky, and again senator.¹³

The Widow Parker had been much opposed to the marriage of her son-in-law, and she never became fully reconciled to the second Mrs. Todd. The situation, therefore, which immediately confronted the young stepmother was not an easy one. Yet she assumed the duties of her new household with poise, tact, patience, and a deep interest in the welfare, education, and training of her six stepchildren. Mary, as Mrs. Todd soon discovered, was a sprightly, but curiously complex little

creature, high-strung, headstrong, precocious, warmhearted, sympathetic, and generous—a mischievous tomboy who, while leading her older brother Levi a merry chase, was also passionately fond of birds, flowers, pretty dresses, and other dainty things that delight the feminine heart.

Mary was about eight years old when she entered the academy of Dr. John Ward, located in a large, two-story building on the southeast corner of Market and Second streets.¹⁴ Dr. Ward, the rector of Christ Church Episcopal, was a native of Connecticut who had been bishop of North Carolina before coming to Kentucky in search of health. Kindly, scholarly, benevolent, he was nevertheless a strict disciplinarian. Far in advance of his time, he believed in coeducation, and his school numbered about 120 boys and girls from the best families in Lexington.

Early morning recitation was a peculiar regulation of Dr. Ward's academy, and during the summer months the history class assembled at five o'clock. One morning just before day-break the new nightwatchman, a recent stalwart immigrant from the Emerald Isle, observed a young lady hurrying up Second Street with a bundle under her arm. Thinking that he had discovered an elopement, the vigilant watchman gave chase, which ended only when the breathless "scholar," much to the merriment of the other pupils and the annoyance of Dr. Ward, burst into the schoolroom hotly pursued by Flannigan, club in hand.¹⁵

Mary Todd's cousin, Elizabeth Humphreys, a member of the Todd household during Mary's girlhood, on September 28, 1895, wrote vivid reminiscences of Dr. Ward and Mary's early school days:

His requirements and rules were very strict and woe to her who did not conform to the letter. Mary accepted the conditions cheerfully, even eagerly, and never came under his censure. Mr. Ward required his pupils to recite some of their lessons before breakfast. On bright summer mornings this was no hardship, and Mary skipped blithely to her recitations, but she never murmured

when conditions were not so pleasant. When she had to get up out of her warm bed and dress by candle-light, she smiled and trudged sturdily through snow and sleet. . . . Mary was far in advance over girls of her age in education. She had a retentive memory and a mind that enabled her to grasp and thoroughly understand the lessons she was required to learn. It was a hard task but long before I was through mine she had finished hers and was plying her knitting-needles. We were required to knit ten rounds of socks every evening.

Her cousin further stated that "Mary even as a schoolgirl in her gingham dresses was certainly very pretty. She had clear, blue eyes, long lashes, light brown hair with a glint of bronze and a lovely complexion. Her figure was beautiful and no old master ever modeled a more perfect arm and hand."¹⁶

But these days of early girlhood were far from a mere routine of tasks and recitations. Mary's uncle, the Reverend Robert Stuart, a professor of languages at Transylvania and a noted Presbyterian minister, lived a few miles from Lexington on the Richmond Pike, and here Mary spent many happy days: horseback rides down the shady winding lanes, picnics with the Stuart children under the majestic trees of nearby woodlands, nutting expeditions in autumn with excursions into dense thickets in search of wild grapes and the luscious papaw, hilarious sleigh rides in winter, with games, stories, and apple roastings in the evenings on the broad hearth of the giant fireplace that snapped and roared with seasoned hickory wood.¹⁷

Mary's most intimate friends, except for her cousin, Mary Stuart, were girls slightly older than she: Mary and Margaret Wickliffe, daughters of state senator Robert Wickliffe, distinguished lawyer and one of the largest and wealthiest slave-owners in Kentucky, who lived at "Glendower"; Isabella Bodley, daughter of Thomas Bodley, officer of the War of 1812, presidential elector, grand master of the Masonic Grand Lodge of Kentucky, who lived at "Bodley House" and had a French governess and an English head nurse for the junior members of his large family; Catherine Cordelia Trotter, daughter of

General George Trotter, Jr., prominent merchant, one of the heroes of the Battle of the Thames, colonel of the old 42nd Regiment of Kentucky Militia in which Robert S. Todd had been a captain, who lived at "Woodlands"; and Mary Jane and Julia Warfield, daughters of Dr. Elisha Warfield, noted surgeon, professor of surgery and obstetrics at Transylvania, breeder of famous race horses, who lived at "The Meadows."

Adding much to the hilarity of all parties and outings, always anxious to promote the happiness and entertainment of this group, were the idolized older brother of the Wickliffe girls—Charles, tall, handsome, volatile, auburn-haired, blue-eyed—and Catherine Cordelia Trotter's amiable brother—George, dark, tense, studious, and slight of build, equally ready for fun and frolic. The two young men, almost the same age, were inseparable companions, and one or both of them on the front seat of the family two-horse carry-all, with Mary Todd and her young friends waving gaily from the rear of the vehicle, were a familiar sight on the streets of Lexington and the broad turnpikes of its countryside.¹⁸

Then, as suddenly as a falling star streaking across a calm, clear, evening sky, an event occurred at Frankfort which instantly ignited public opinion and set Bluegrass families aflame—one against another—for many a long year.

A bill was introduced in the legislature to prohibit the importation of slaves into Kentucky. Instantly Robert Wickliffe from the floor of the Senate scathingly denounced this surprising move of the antislavery group. Robert J. Breckinridge and Cassius M. Clay launched a vicious counterattack. Kentucky's first great battle for slavery—a contest which would shake the state to its foundations—was on, and distressing events followed fast and furious.

In only a few short months stark tragedy sat at the fireside of two Lexington families who were very close to the heart of Mary Todd. On March 4, 1829, Charles Wickliffe, impetuously rushing to the defense of his father, wrote an article which was

published in the *Kentucky Reporter*, proslavery mouthpiece, phrased in the most vitriolic language. The owners and editor of the *Kentucky Gazette*, chief organ of the emancipationists, "were a set of malevolent, black-hearted men." The sole reason for the existence of this vile set was to destroy the reputation of all persons who opposed their unholy schemes.

"Look at your present Senator [Robert Wickliffe] whose political life has been consistent, independent and firm, always pursuing a straight course, never losing sight of the interest and honor of his country. In the *Gazette* of the 13th ult. they have denounced him as a heartless Aristocrat and dishonorable man." Young Wickliffe scorned the "nest of vipers called *Gazette* men," and particularly the writer of the piece, as "cheap calumniators" wholly "destitute of truth." "If other epithets would be termed decorous towards the public," said he, "I would add them also."

The next issue of the *Gazette* answered Wickliffe very much in kind, and three days later, a pistol in each hip pocket, the infuriated youth went to the newspaper office and attacked editor Thomas R. Benning, a small, unarmed man. When the newspaperman attempted to escape through a rear door, Wickliffe shot him in the back. The killing of Benning threw the community, already excited by the agitation of the "Negro Law," into violent turmoil which became a tempest when Wickliffe was promptly acquitted by a proslavery jury. The report that the defendant had emerged from his trial "swagging and defiant" further fired public indignation.

Shortly thereafter it was widely rumored that friends of young, scholarly George Trotter were pressing him to take Benning's place on the *Gazette*, its editorial page having been inactive since his death. It was being urged as a duty he owed to the memory of his deceased father, General Trotter, "one of the earliest opponents of slavery in the West." This rumor and its accuracy were confirmed when in September the *Gazette* was delivered to apprehensive readers with the name of George Trotter at its masthead.

The dread of further conflict measurably increased when the very next issue contained an editorial which strongly insinuated that the acquittal of Benning's slayer had been due to a "picked and prejudiced" jury and to the "undue influence" of Henry Clay, who had delivered for two and a half hours a "harangue" in his defense.

Ten days later the young editor received a note which read:

Lexington, September 28, 1829.

Mr. George J. Trotter:

A wanton and unprovoked attack made upon my feelings in the Gazette of the 18th of the present month, induces me to demand that satisfaction which is due from one gentleman to another. My friend, Dr. Ritchie, is authorized to settle the several points of time, mode and place.

Your obedient—

Charles Wickliffe.

On October 1 Trotter replied:

Mr. Charles Wickliffe,

Sir, your note was received on yesterday by the hands of Dr. James Ritchie and whilst I cannot recognize your right to call upon me in the manner you have, still the satisfaction you ask for *shall not be denied*. My friend, John Robb, is fully authorized to confer with Dr. Ritchie as to the time, place and distance.

George J. Trotter.

P.S. It is not expected or desired by me that Mr. Robb will act longer in the affair than the arrival of my friend. G.J.T.

Under the code duello now being so punctiliously observed, Trotter as the challenged party had the privilege of choosing the weapons and specifying the distance, time, and place of meeting, which he did on the following day.

Lexington, October 2nd, 1829.

Sir:

Mr. Trotter requests me to inform you that he has selected the pistol to meet Mr. Wickliffe, the distance to be 8 feet. Mr. Trotter will meet Mr. Wickliffe on Friday morning the 9th at 9:00 o'clock A.M. on the Fayette and Scott line, to be selected by the parties.

The friend whom Mr. Trotter has selected to act in the affair (for reasons satisfactory) does not wish to be known in the affair until Wednesday morning, at which time he will hand in the preliminary arrangements.

Respectfully,
John H. Robb.¹⁹

Friday, October 9, dawned cloudless, one of those glorious days of Indian summer in Kentucky. The long night had been sleepless with anxiety and foreboding for those who loved these two hotheaded scions of Bluegrass aristocracy—friends but yesterday—now about to settle their quarrel on a so-called field of honor dictated by the barbarous code. The whole community stood aghast at the mortal distance named by Trotter—only eight feet—when the customary distance was ten paces, or thirty feet!

Shortly before nine o'clock several two-horse carriages on the Georgetown pike turned into a large woodland—the old duelling ground—about six and a half miles from Lexington. The principals, their surgeons, and seconds alighted. It was observed that “Mr. Trotter and Mr. Wickliffe bowed at a respectable distance, neither speaking.”

Dr. James Ritchie acting for Wickliffe and Captain Henry Johnson for Trotter marked off the distance, loaded and checked the flintlock pistols. The surgeons spread blankets on the ground a few yards away with their instruments, bandages, and medicines.

The choice of position and the right to give the word were both won by Dr. Ritchie. As the parties took their positions, Captain Johnson cautioned Wickliffe to hold his pistol more perpendicularly, but Trotter curtly instructed his second to “leave the matter entirely with Mr. Wickliffe.” The two men stood calmly without coats, “presenting the right side to each other, their pistols held with muzzles presented to the ground.”

“One—two—three—four—FIVE,” counted Ritchie slowly and distinctly. The pistols spoke together. The ball from Trotter’s

weapon tore through Wickliffe's trousers, grazing him slightly at the hip. Wickliffe's aim had left Trotter untouched.

"I demand a second fire," said Wickliffe very sharply.

"Sir, you shall have it *with pleasure*," replied Trotter.

Fifteen minutes later the duelists fired again—and again Wickliffe missed, while Trotter's bullet inflicted a mortal wound on Wickliffe in the lower abdomen.

As the stricken man slowly "eased himself to the ground," Captain Johnson approached him and in polite obedience to the rules of the code inquired if he was satisfied.

"I am, Sir," said Wickliffe. "I am shot and unable to fire again."

Furiously galloping horses hitched to a careening rockaway rushed Wickliffe back to beautiful "Glendower," but all that loving hands and medical aid could do was of no avail. Just past noon Charles Wickliffe died, another precious sacrifice on the altar of the slavocracy.²⁰

In 1832 Robert S. Todd purchased a new residence on Main Street just two blocks from his Short Street house.²¹ The second children were coming on, and a more spacious dwelling was desirable. Two slave jails were now being operated near the Short Street property—one just across the street and the other next door with only a narrow alley intervening. One event, however, in which Mary took a delighted interest, occurred before she left the old home. Her oldest sister Elizabeth was married on February 29, 1832, to Ninian W. Edwards, son of former Governor Ninian Edwards of Illinois and then a junior at Transylvania, and Elizabeth's uncle, Dr. Stuart, was officiating minister.²²

The new home on Main Street was a roomy brick house with double parlors, a wide hall in the center, and a long ell. The grounds of the rear lawn were ample for coach house, stable, and servants' quarters. The side lawn was a beautiful flower garden with a white gravel walk winding through the

clipped bluegrass to the conservatory, and through its lower edge ran a clear, gentle little stream, the Town Fork of Elkhorn Creek, where the Todd children waded and chased the minnows that scurried across the smooth limestone bottom.

At fourteen years of age Mary Todd finished the preparatory course at Dr. Ward's and was ready to enter the select boarding school of Mme. Victorie Charlotte LeClere Mentelle. Mme. Mentelle and her husband, Augustus Waldemare Mentelle, were French gentlefolk of culture and high education. Both were born in Paris: Mme. Mentelle, the only child of a French physician; M. Mentelle, the son of a professor in the National and Royal Academy, who was also "historiographer" to the king. Shortly after their marriage in 1792 the young couple had fled from the terrors of the Revolution to America, finally reaching Lexington in 1798.²³ For several years following their arrival the Mentelles taught a mixed class in French and gave lessons in dancing.²⁴ Then they established a boarding school for girls on a rolling tract of woodland opposite "Ashland" on the Richmond Pike, donated by Mary's cousin, Mrs. Russell, a wealthy widow of the town.²⁵

Mme. Mentelle was a rather large, handsome woman, an excellent dancer, a finished musician, an accomplished scholar in her native tongue, and Mary Todd undoubtedly acquired from her an intimate knowledge and a deep love of French, but the curriculum was much broader than the mere study of a single language. In fact, the chief purpose of Mme. Mentelle was to give her pupils, as she announced through the press, "a truly useful & 'Solid' English Education in all its branches."²⁶

However, it was French that Mary took so completely to her heart. "She never gave it up," said Elizabeth Humphreys, "but as long as I knew her continued to read the finest French authors. At different times, French gentlemen came to Lexington to study English and when one was fortunate enough to meet her, he was not only surprised, but delighted to find her perfect acquaintance with his language."²⁷



MARY ANN TODD. *Emilie Todd Helm's copy from the original daguerreotype*



HOME OF "WIDOW" PARKER, MARY TODD'S GRANDMOTHER, AS IT LOOKS TODAY



THE CONFECTIONERY OF MONSIEUR GIRON. *From the Mulligan Collection*



DR. WARD'S ACADEMY

Mary Todd spent four happy years at the institution on the Richmond Pike. Every Monday morning the Todd carriage, driven by Nelson, the dignified coachman, rolled down the long avenue and left Mary on the broad piazza of the low, rambling, ivy-covered structure that sheltered Mme. Mentelle's little flock. And then on Friday afternoons Nelson came for her again.

It was not all study at the Mentelle school. This French gentlewoman knew the drudgery of work without play and how to maintain proper discipline without irksome restrictions. When afternoon classes were over, in warm weather the girls strolled arm in arm about the ample grounds, played games, or read to one another on the rustic benches under the fine old forest trees. Sometimes they gathered at the big sycamore near the entrance to the grounds to wave a greeting to their friend, Mr. Clay, as he drove to town for his mail. On winter evenings M. Mentelle, who wore his abundant white hair in a queue and still dressed in smallclothes, would take down his violin, and Mme. Mentelle, who "spared no pains with the graces and manners of young Ladies submitted to her care," instructed the pupils "in the latest and most fashionable Co-tillions, Round & Hop Waltzes, Hornpipes, Galopades, Mohawks, Spanish, Scottish, Polish, Tyrolienne dances and the beautiful Circassian Circle." "It was at Madame Mentelle's," according to cousin Elizabeth, "that she [Mary] learned to dance so gracefully. In after years, it was her favorite amusement and the aristocratic society of Lexington afforded ample opportunity for the indulgence of this pastime."²⁸

When Mary Todd finished boarding school, her father was one of the most prominent and influential citizens in central Kentucky, and no man in the state was more highly respected or better liked than Robert S. Todd. For years he had been a member of the Fayette County Court. Upon the incorporation of the city of Lexington in 1831 he was elected to its first board of council, and on July 13, 1835, the Branch Bank of Kentucky

opened its doors, with Robert S. Todd as its first president. Under the firm name of Oldham, Todd & Company he was also engaged in the cotton manufacturing business with a large plant at Sandersville near Lexington and a wholesale store in town, supplying an extensive trade in Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, and Ohio.

Although high in the councils of the Whig party in Kentucky, Todd had been for more than twenty years the almost unanimous choice of all political parties for clerk of the Kentucky House of Representatives.²⁹ Now he was urged to become a candidate for lieutenant governor, and his name was actually presented to the state convention at Harrodsburg, but withdrawn at Todd's insistence by his friend, Richard H. Menifee.

The Todd home on West Main Street was noted for its warm hospitality. The gracious Mrs. Todd was a charming hostess, with Mary an eager, capable assistant. As was customary in the households of gentlemen of the Bluegrass, the Todd cellar was always well stocked with the finest Kentucky whisky and rare brandies,³⁰ and it was freely conceded among those whose opinions were respected in such matters that "not even Mr. Clay's Charles could mix a mint julep like Robert Todd's Nelson."³¹

When Henry Clay, Senator Crittenden, their brilliant young protégé, Richard H. Menifee, and other distinguished friends arrived at the Todd home, Nelson knew that a display of his wizardry was expected. And in a little while the old Negro, clad in his blue swallowtail with big brass buttons, would appear in the library or the vine-covered house in the garden, carrying a silver tray filled with all the ingredients of his magic concoction.

The making of a julep was a ritual with Nelson, always to be performed with solemn dignity in the presence of thirsty, admiring guests: Tender, fragrant mint firmly pressed with the back of a spoon against the glistening inside of a coin silver goblet; the bruised leaves gently removed and the cup half

filled with cracked ice; mellow bourbon, aged in oaken staves, bubbling from a brown jigger, percolated through the sparkling cubes and slivers; granulated sugar slowly stirred into chilled limestone water to a silvery mixture as smooth as some rare Egyptian oil was poured on top of the ice; then while beads of moisture gathered on the burnished exterior of the goblet, old Nelson garnished the frosted brim with choice sprigs of mint and presented the tall cup with a courtly bow to the nearest guest.

However, Clay sometimes served his own guests with wine instead of bourbon. Gustave Koerner, a young Bavarian from Belleville, Illinois, attending the Transylvania law school, and another admirer of the Sage of Ashland walked out one morning to "Mr. Clay's place." "About a mile on a fine turnpike road" they "came upon a fine park in the midst of which stood a tolerably large, white mansion-house." Going up to the door they "rang the bell, and a negro servant showed us into a large, semi-oval room, richly furnished, the walls being decorated with some fine portraits in oil." What attracted young Koerner first was "a large set of silver plate, amongst which was a very large, finely-chiseled pitcher with an inscription on it, which was on a beautifully carved side-board."

In a few minutes Clay came in. "A very long frock-coat made him look even taller than he was. His face was very long, and his mouth uncommonly large. He had very light blue eyes which he kept half closed when he spoke. His hair was thin and of a reddish color. There was a playful humor about his lips. His appearance upon the whole was not at first prepossessing; but when you heard him converse, you felt you were under the influence of a great and good man."

Clay politely invited his guests to sit down, and shortly thereafter

a black servant came in and presented us on a silver waiter three glasses of Madeira of an excellent quality, which we emptied, bowing to one another. . . . Of course, Mr. Clay showed that he had been living in the best society here and in Europe. He knew how

to draw people into conversation and to say something pleasant to everyone without appearing to flatter. He took snuff, which is quite uncommon here and handled his snuff box quite diplomatically. Seeing that our eyes had been repeatedly on the exquisite silver plate, he showed us the pitcher. The inscription on it proved that it was a present from some of the South American countries whose rights to recognition as independent states when they revolted from Spain, he had so eloquently advocated in the halls of the Senate.³²

Shortly after his visit to Clay, Koerner wrote his fiancée:

Lexington is a lively, handsome city, built on wave-like hills, surrounded by beautiful villas. The streets are nearly all lined with shade trees. No wonder the inhabitants are very proud of it! My American guide-book calls it perhaps the finest spot on the globe. Of course, I cannot subscribe to this panegyric. But, I am quite pleased with the place. It is the richest city in Kentucky and hence there is much show and luxury here. I have been in several houses and must confess that with us—in Frankfort-on-the-Main—the wealthiest people do not live as elegantly and comfortably.³³

Although Lexington by this time had fallen far behind Louisville and Cincinnati in commercial activity, she had steadfastly maintained her position as the center of education. Such institutions as Transylvania University, Lexington Female Seminary, Dr. Ward's Academy, Maguire's Classical, Scientific and English School for Male and Female Students, Mme. Mentelle's Boarding-School for Girls, VanDoren's Institute for Lads and Young Gentlemen, the Protestant Boarding-School for Young Ladies, Mrs. George P. Richardson's School for Little Misses, Cabell's Dancing-School, and Mme. Blaique's Dancing-Academy were all located within the limits of the town or its environs.

Lexington was also the social center of the state, and from June to September the taverns, boardinghouses, and private residences were crowded with guests from many states farther south who came to spend the summer in the Bluegrass. Thus the town had incurred the envy of her less popular neighbors, and it was believed in many quarters that the women of the

Bluegrass were vain, haughty creatures who looked with disdain upon those not fortunate enough to have been born in or near the "Athens of the West." Yet young James Speed of Louisville, later attorney general in the cabinet of Abraham Lincoln, did not find this true of local society when he came to Lexington to enter Transylvania University. "Much better pleased in every respect than I anticipated," he wrote back home, "and especially with the ladies of Lexington. Tell my sisters of this and tell them that all they hear there of their stiffness is altogether a bugbear."³⁴

In 1836 Frances Todd went to live with her sister, Elizabeth Edwards, in Springfield, Illinois, and her departure left Mary the oldest daughter at home. She was then almost eighteen years old, with a plump, graceful figure, though below medium height; mischievous, long-lashed blue eyes under delicately arched brows; a broad, smooth forehead, straight nose, and a rather broad expressive mouth that broke dimples in her cheeks when she smiled.³⁵ Brilliant, vivacious, impulsive, she possessed a charming personality marred only by a transient hauteur and, without malice, a caustic, devastating wit that could sting like a hornet.

On one occasion, as Elizabeth Humphreys recalled, it was both demeanor and tongue that nearly got her into trouble.

Mary found more difficulty in getting along smoothly with an Episcopalian student of Theology (a tutor in the family) than I ever knew her to have [wrote Elizabeth to Emilie Todd Helm]. The young man's manners were assuming and dictatorial and offensive, but we all tried to be polite. In spite of Mary's efforts to be agreeable, there was nothing but discord between them—let her do her best. With an ill-grounded and unjust suspicion that she was trying on all occasions to insult him, he waged a war without cause.

It happened frequently that Mary's father would be absent on business & Aunt by reason of illness not able to come to the dining room. One morning on such an occasion Mary & I went after the bell was rung to the breakfast room. Presby came in soon. Mary

took her seat at the head of the table, the young Theologian at the foot and I on one side. Grace was said with due reverence and then we commenced with keen appetites on the feast of good things before us. Among the choice delicacies, we had some remarkably fine maple syrup. Mary helped me and then offered some to Mr. Presby, with the remark that she had always understood the Yankees ate molasses with everything. It was the word "Yankees," I suppose, that raised the storm. He was greatly irritated and in a real down East nasal twang spoke with an emphasis to be remembered for all time: "Miss 'Maree' there is a point beyond which I won't and can't stand. Miss Elizabeth with one or two exceptions, has always been polite, but, Miss 'Maree' never." The whole thing was so ludicrous to Mary, she leaned back and laughed immoderately. The laugh acted like a charm, it was "oil upon the waters" and we sailed the remainder of that day on a calm sea.³⁶

It was a wholesome, fun-loving group of young folk that gave spice and gaiety to the staid old town during the few remaining years that Mary made her home in Lexington. These fair young creatures were, of course, not lacking in the most handsome and eligible beaux. Gallant and romantic, most of them members of one of the four local military companies, accomplished in the exercises of the broadsword and the rapier, expert marksmen with both pistol and rifle—still the young men of Mary's acquaintance seem not to have attracted her, and there is not even a tradition that her heart ever gave the faintest little flutter in the presence of any of these scions of the old, aristocratic Bluegrass families. "She accepted their attentions," says Elizabeth, "but at times her face indicated lack of interest."

The ballrooms of Mathurin Giron offered Mary an opportunity to indulge in her favorite amusement. It was the most fashionable of resorts for such entertainment in Kentucky.³⁷ Giron, a unique character of the town, had his famous establishment on Mill Street in a quaint, two-story brick building with Tuscan pilasters which supported a balcony of iron lace along the front of the upper story. A confectionery occupied

the first floor, where Giron's Swiss cook, Dominique Ritter, produced from the mysterious depths of his ovens marvelous creations in pastry, ripe fruitcakes, tall pyramids of meringues, and macaroons draped in filmy, snow-white sugar webbing. Here was made the mammoth "casellated" cake with the Stars and Stripes gloriously etched upon its sloping sides in red, white, and blue, which the citizens of Lexington presented to Marquis de Lafayette on his visit to Kentucky in 1825. On the second floor, separated by a wide hall, were the ballrooms with great paneled folding doors of polished cherry opening to the high frescoed ceiling. In each room were vast fireplaces with mantelpieces of the same exquisite wood supported by graceful columns.³⁸

Little Giron, fastidiously dressed, hardly more than five feet in height, and almost as broad as he was tall, with his round, smoothly shaved face, and his cordial, kindly manner had been Mary Todd's friend since her childhood. The confectionery was just around the corner from her father's store and only a short distance from Dr. Ward's academy. The Frenchman had been attracted by the little girl's perfect ease of manner and utter lack of self-consciousness in the presence of adults, and amused by her quite obvious gift of sparkling repartee. Mary would frequently drop in on her way home from school or as she went to and from the store on Main Street, and many were the spiced buns and hot ginger cakes that he had slipped into her lunch basket in the course of their conversations.³⁹

Mary, now grown to womanhood, still occupied a niche all her own in the large heart of Mathurin Giron. Their mutual love for the Gallic language was in itself an enduring bond between them. At the brilliant suppers and balls that she attended, Giron hovered about Mary and her friends, voicing solicitude for their comfort and pleasure in his soft, piquant, broken English, and when she addressed him in his native tongue, his dark eyes glowed with ecstasy.⁴⁰

In the summer of 1837 Mary Todd went to visit her sisters, Elizabeth and Frances, in Illinois. She had other relatives there also: an uncle, Dr. John Todd, and her three lawyer cousins: John T. Stuart, John J. Hardin, and Stephen T. Logan. The visitor from the Bluegrass had not been long in Springfield when she began to hear about Stuart's new law partner. His name was Abraham Lincoln. Both Stuart and Hardin had served with him in the Black Hawk War. He and her brother-in-law, Ninian W. Edwards, had been members of the celebrated "Long Nine," who averaged more than six feet in height, from Sangamon County in the General Assembly at Vandalia.

Lincoln, she learned, was a newcomer in Springfield from a village on the Sangamon River called New Salem and had only recently been admitted to the bar. According to his friends he was a man of strange contradictions: fond of the society of women, but shy in their presence; subject to fits of depression, yet a storyteller whose humor was irresistible; a shrewd, wily politician, but a man of rugged honesty and unswerving integrity; ungainly in personal appearance, though possessed of a simple, natural grace of manner, with a face homely to a marked degree in repose, but singularly charming when animated; a man who would fritter away hours in veritable nonsense with shallow, sometimes tipsy companions, yet a profound, logical thinker, a persuasive stump speaker, a dangerous adversary in rough and tumble debate. Mary Todd's curiosity must have been piqued at these queer descriptions of a most unusual man, but she did not meet him once during her three-month visit in Springfield. Her time was quite fully occupied with balls, levees, and receptions given in her honor by relatives and friends, and the weeks passed swiftly.

As for Lincoln, he was then passing through the loneliest period of his life. Except for a few political acquaintances and one or two warm friends, he was almost a penniless stranger in the bustling capital of that new, growing country. But even so, he was not by any means idle. Besides a droll, halfhearted

courtship with portly Mary Owens, he was also deeply absorbed in his first important lawsuit—a bitter altercation with General James Adams, a prominent local citizen and lawyer. Lincoln boldly charged that his client, a poor widow, had been defrauded of a valuable tract of land by Adams, who had forged her deceased husband's name to the deed. It was largely the vigorous prosecution of this case that brought Lincoln shortly into prominence.⁴¹

In late autumn, 1837, Mary Todd returned home. The relations that existed between Mary and her stepmother, particularly during the years just before she went to live in Springfield, and her reasons for leaving home have long been matters of bitter dispute. Only two sources of documentary evidence on these mooted questions from persons then in a position to know now exist. In the papers of the suit brought to settle the estate of Robert S. Todd in 1849, George Todd, Mary's youngest brother, referred to "the malignant and continued attempts on the part of his stepmother, Mrs. E. L. Todd, to poison the mind of his father towards him," and asserted that Robert S. Todd was "mortified that his last child by his first wife should be obliged, like all his first children, to abandon his house by the relentless persecution of a stepmother."⁴² A letter, dated "May—, '48," written by Mary Lincoln to her husband, who was then in Washington, speaks of "Ma," her stepmother, saying: "She is very obliging and accommodating, but if she thought any of us were on her hands again, I believe she would be worse than ever."⁴³

These grave charges against Betsy Todd by her two most volatile stepchildren, considered carefully in connection with the voluminous record of a litigation that will be discussed in subsequent chapters, though taken at face value are not without mitigation. It must be remembered that by the summer of 1839 Mrs. Todd in thirteen years had borne her husband eight children. Seven were living, their ages ranging from eleven years down to an infant in arms, and the ninth child

was born two years later. Under the existing circumstances it is not surprising that the willful, impetuous temperament of Mary Todd clashed sharply now and then with the conventional ideas of her busy stepmother. Moreover, it is extremely probable that the attitude of Mary's grandmother, Mrs. Parker, who never quite forgave Betsy Humphreys for marrying the husband of her dead daughter, had considerable influence in fomenting such discord as there was in the Todd household.

But whatever her situation may have been at home, Mary Todd's last summer in Kentucky was well occupied with the good times of Lexington's social season. From the first of June to early fall the town was filled with wealthy planters and their families who came northward to avoid the sweltering heat and the insidious malaria of the Deep South. The local newspapers left a fragmentary record of social activities during their stay in the Bluegrass, and doubtless Mary Todd had her share in all the gaiety and entertainment.

So it may be safely assumed that she attended on a September night in 1839 probably her last public function in the old home town, a "grand farewell ball" given, as stated, by "the élite of southern society who have resorted in Lexington during the past summer." The affair was "in the hands of gentlemen & their ladies from Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, Arkansas and Alabama." The ballrooms of Mathurin Giron were never more alluring than they were that evening. The walls were painted to represent landscapes of blooming orange trees set here and there in clustering tubs. Chandeliers and sconces were lighted with innumerable wax candles, yellow and green and rose. Gentlemen in blue broadcloth coats with brass buttons, buff waistcoats, and laced ruffled shirts; ladies in white satins, with ethereal silk overdresses embroidered in fantastic figures, glided over the gleaming maple floors through the intricate, graceful mazes of the Circassian Circle to the soft strains of violin with pianoforte accompaniment. Couples with interesting things to say to each other occupied secluded benches along the iron balcony. "Rarely," said a gentleman who was present, "have

we witnessed so brilliant a display of beauty and fashion as graced the occasion."

A month later, on a crisp autumn morning, the Todd carriage drove up to the trim little depot of the Lexington and Ohio Railroad at Mill and Water streets. On the narrow track of strap-iron rails spiked down to sills of stone stood the pride of the Western Country, a tiny steam locomotive called "The Nottaway." Attached to it was a single coach with seats for a dozen passengers inside and as many more on the top, which was surrounded by an iron railing.⁴⁴ Old Nelson handed "Mis' Mary's" bags and boxes to the engineer, who placed them beside the other luggage on the woodpile at the rear of the tender. Then, with a lurch and a shrill toot of the whistle the wheezy engine started, and in a few moments the little train was rattling and swaying down Water Street and out through the brown hemp fields and somber meadows. Mary Todd had started on the long journey to her new home in Springfield.

Slavery in the Bluegrass

AT AN assembly ball which Mary Todd attended shortly after her arrival in Springfield she met the young lawyer about whom she had heard so much on her former visit. The often told story of the desultory courtship that followed this introduction need not be repeated again. It is sufficient to note that on Friday evening, November 4, 1842, at the home of her sister, Mrs. Ninian W. Edwards, while the rain beat against the windows of the front parlor, Mary Todd became the wife of Abraham Lincoln.

Lincoln was now the law partner of another of his wife's cousins, Stephen T. Logan. The senior member of the firm of Logan & Lincoln was one of the leaders of the Springfield bar, and he was exactly the right sort of a partner for Mr. A. Lincoln. Logan carefully prepared his cases; Lincoln was rather inclined to extemporize. Logan was a good collector and tight-fisted in money matters; Lincoln was utterly indifferent to material gain. With Logan every activity was subordinate to his profession; Lincoln's chief interest lay in the field of politics, to which the law afforded convenient access. Lincoln had been

taken into the firm because of his remarkable ability as a trial lawyer, but Judge Logan was to be disappointed if he hoped to wean the junior partner away from the dominant passion of his life.

Lincoln had already served four terms in the Illinois legislature and at the time of his venture into matrimony was rather leisurely casting about for further political preferment. "Nothing new here," he wrote to a friend, "except my marrying, which to me is a matter of profound wonder."¹ He of course could not then know that whatever might be said of the event in other respects, he had acquired a life partner who would infuse his phlegmatic temperament with a persevering energy which henceforth pushed him slowly but finally to heights of achievement beyond ambition's fondest dream.²

One is therefore not surprised to find the Springfield lawyer a few months later writing to one of his constituents: "Now if you should hear anyone say that Lincoln don't want to go to Congress, I wish you as a personal friend of mine, would tell him you have reason to believe he is mistaken. The truth is I would like to go very much."³

Mary Todd was a born politician. Since her earliest recollection the home of Robert S. Todd at Lexington had been a favorite rendezvous for the Whig chieftains of Kentucky. Mary knew them all: Robertson, Combs, Morehead, Letcher, Menifee, Buckner, the brilliant Marshall, the wise and beloved Crittenden, and still more intimately, the incomparable Clay, Lincoln's "beau-ideal of a statesman," idol of the Whig party throughout the nation. She had heard these jurists, governors, members of Congress, ministers to foreign countries, cabinet members, senators, and candidate for President of the United States discuss various problems of statecraft, not merely in public address, but around the fireside and the julep table of her father's house, and she was familiar with the important issues of the day.⁴

The one vital question that already held Lincoln's interest

was slavery, and it is no exaggeration to say that Mary Todd possessed more firsthand information on this subject than any other person with whom he had yet come in contact. On March 3, 1837, Lincoln had made his now famous declaration in the legislature at Vandalia that "Slavery is founded on both injustice and bad policy."⁵ On July 23, 1841, in the case of *Bailey v. Cromwell*, the state supreme court had sustained his contention that the law of Illinois presumed all persons free, regardless of color. In his Washington's Birthday address February 22, 1842, Lincoln had invoked the day when there would not be a slave on earth.⁶

Yet, profoundly concerned as he was with this grave problem then beginning to agitate the whole country, Lincoln's knowledge of the Southland's "peculiar institution" was hardly more than superficial. He "saw almost nothing of slavery in his own childhood."⁷ And in his eighth year he moved to Indiana, a part of the Northwest Territory, where slavery was prohibited by the Ordinance of 1787.

At the time of his marriage Lincoln's personal knowledge of slavery in the South was derived almost entirely from having seen a slave sold at New Orleans in 1831 and from his visit to the Speed plantation in Kentucky ten years later. On the other hand, Mary Todd had been reared in the very heart of the largest slaveholding community in Kentucky. There, unlike the Deep South, the form of servitude was more patriarchal than otherwise. The Negro quarters, mostly of hewn logs but sometimes of brick or stone, were grouped near the mansion house. Each cabin had its "truck patch" filled with sweet potatoes and other succulent vegetables and several long rows of watermelons and tobacco. Stands of bees furnished golden honey for "ole Mammy's" flapjacks, while long-eared coon and possum dogs romped with pickaninnies and, often, with the white children around the cabin doors. "Missis" or "Mastah," sitting at the bedside of a sick slave, was not an uncommon sight. Nowhere did the yoke of bondage rest more lightly than on the servants in the household of Robert S. Todd. Chaney

was in undisputed control of the kitchen, pompous old Nelson ruled the stables with a high hand, and black Mammy Sally, despot of the nursery, gave orders to the little Todds which even their mother did not dare revoke.

But Lincoln's wife was also familiar with the other side of the picture. In the southwest corner of the public square at Lexington stood the auction block, rickety and worn from many shuffling feet, while near the northeast corner was the whipping post of "black locust one foot in diameter, ten feet high and sunk two and a half feet in the ground."⁸ A visitor to the town in those early days, witnessing the use of this instrument of torture, observed in his journal that the public square was "occasionally the scene of a barbarous practice; for it is here that incorrigible or delinquent negroes are flogged unmercifully. I saw this punishment inflicted on two of these wretches. Their screams soon collected a numerous crowd—I could not help saying to myself, 'These cries are the knell of Kentucky liberty.'"⁹

During all the years that Mary Todd lived on Main Street frequent gangs of Negroes were driven by traders over this thoroughfare en route to the slave markets of the South. The Todd residence stood close to the street, separated from it only by the width of the sidewalk. Mary from her fourteenth year watched these unhappy creatures—men, women, and children, manacled two abreast, connected by heavy iron chains that extended the whole length of the line—as they plodded wearily past her door on their long march to the cotton fields of Georgia or the rice plantations of torrid Louisiana.¹⁰

That Mary and her cousin, Elizabeth Humphreys, were much distressed by these pathetic scenes is a matter of record, and each occurrence planted the conviction more deeply in their young hearts that slavery was a monstrous wrong.¹¹ Occasionally some skulking wretch on his way to the Ohio River and freedom would creep up to the friendly back doors in Lexington for a bite of food. A mark on the fence in the alley at the rear of the Todd home indicated that "vittles" could

be had there, and many were the runaways fed by old Mammy Sally with the help of Mary and her cousin.¹²

One day Mary and Elizabeth read in a New Orleans newspaper of the outrages perpetrated by a Mme. LaLaurie on her slaves. "We were horrified," said her cousin, "and talked of nothing else for days. If one such case could happen, it damned the whole institution."¹³ And if Mary Todd was affected by brutality to slaves in distant Louisiana, it is not difficult to imagine the indelible impressions made upon her by similar occurrences that later took place in the vicinity of her own home.

Fielding L. Turner, a wealthy retired jurist, and his wife Caroline, member of a prominent Boston family, lived only a short distance from the Todds.¹⁴ They kept a pretentious establishment and owned probably more house servants than any other family in the city. Mrs. Turner, a large muscular woman with an ungovernable temper, frequently whipped her slaves with such violence that Judge Turner himself said: "She has been the immediate cause of the death of six of my servants by her severities."¹⁵ Her conduct had already become a public scandal, when one day in the early spring of 1837 Mrs. Turner deliberately threw a small black boy out of a second-story window onto the stone flagging of the courtyard below, injuring his spine, breaking an arm and a leg, and making him a cripple for life.

The wanton cruelty of this incident intensely aroused the whole community, and in order to save his wife from threatened criminal prosecution, as well as for the protection of his other slaves, Judge Turner had her forcibly removed from their home to the lunatic asylum where after a confinement of several days Mrs. Turner demanded a trial on the question of her sanity. On March 31, 1837, a jury composed of Robert S. Todd and eleven other citizens was impaneled in the Fayette Circuit Court and "sworn well and truly to inquire into the state of mind of Caroline A. Turner." Before the trial began,

GREAT SALE of SLAVES

JANUARY 10, 1855

THERE Will Be Offered For Sale at Public Auction at the SLAVE MARKET, CHEAPSIDE LEXINGTON, All The SLAVES of JOHN CARTER, Esquire, of LEWIS COUNTY, KY. On Account of His Removal to Indiana, a Free State. The Slaves Listed Below Were All Raised on the CARTER PLANTATION at QUICK RUN, Lewis County, Kentucky.

.....

3 Bucks Aged from 20 to 26, Strong, Ablebodied
1 Wench, Sallie, Aged 42, Excellent Cook
1 Wench, Lize, Aged 23 with 6 mo. old Picinny
One Buck Aged 52, good Kennel Man
17 Bucks Aged from twelve to twenty, Excellent

.....

TERMS. Strictly CASH at Sale, as owner must realize cash, owing to his removal to Indiana. Offers for the entire lot will be entertained previous to sale by addressing the undersigned.

JOHN CARTER, Esq.

Po. Clarksburg

Lewis County, Kentucky

SALE OF "BUCKS" AND "WENCHES" ON CHEAPSIDE

Facsimile in the Coleman Collection



SLAVE CABINS IN THE BLUEGRASS. *Coleman Collection*

however, the court received information that the commissioners of the asylum, finding no evidence of mental derangement in the defendant, had already released her from custody, and the jury was thereupon discharged and the matter dropped.¹⁶

During the early part of Mary Todd's last year in Kentucky her neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell, were tried on a charge of "atrocious brutality" to a young female slave. The indignation of the citizens of Lexington is apparent from the publicity that was given to the proceedings. Dr. Constant testified that one cold morning he saw Mrs. Maxwell severely whipping a barefooted, thinly clad Negro girl "without being particular whether she struck her in the face or not." She was bleeding profusely from cuts and lacerations on the head and body. A month or so previous the witness noticed several scars on the girl's face, and she had kept an eye tied up for a week. Another witness, passing along the street, had seen a son of the Maxwells flogging this slave with a cowhide. The girl was cringing before the blows that fell upon her frail shoulders and begged piteously for mercy, but when she turned her face toward young Maxwell, he would strike her squarely across the nose and cheeks, sometimes with the keen lash and again with the heavy butt of the whip. A medical examination at the time of the trial revealed bruises, lacerations, and the searing marks of a red-hot iron on her emaciated body.¹⁷

However, the tragedy of the slave lay far deeper than mere mistreatment. Its dark, sinister shadow fell across the threshold of homes where the slave might even be the head of the household and her children the acknowledged flesh and blood of the master.

Mary Todd could not remember when she did not know Richard M. Johnson, owner of "Blue Springs," a large, fertile plantation in the adjoining county of Scott. Hero of the Battle of the Thames, widely acclaimed as the slayer of the noted Indian chief Tecumseh, senior United States senator from Ken-

tucky, "Dick" Johnson was for years a welcome visitor in the Todd home on Short Street. Even after his break with Henry Clay—although he never came to the Main Street residence and the intimacy was never as close as before—Johnson and Robert S. Todd remained good personal friends.

A sturdily built man, slightly under medium height, with a shock of unruly hair prematurely gray, noticeably lame from the five wounds he had received while leading his mounted Kentuckians in the furious charge that routed Proctor's British Regulars and his savage allies, careless of dress and invariably wearing his beloved red waistcoat, "Old Tecumseh" was a prime favorite in the drawing rooms of Dolly Madison at the White House and moved in the most select circles of Capital society during his entire public life. A celebrated Washington hostess once described him as "the most tender-hearted, mild, affectionate and benevolent of men."¹⁸

Colonel Johnson never married, but in early manhood he took for his mistress an attractive octoroon slave girl, Julia Chinn, one of the chattels which had come to him in the settlement of his father's estate. Julia was in complete charge of all the domestic concerns of "Blue Springs" and was the mother of his two handsome daughters, Imogene and Adaline, who bore such slight evidence of Negro blood that, as their tutor observed, "a stranger would not suspect them of being what they really are—the children of a colored woman."

Deeply religious and like their mother members of the Great Crossings Baptist Church, they were as carefully and tenderly reared and their paternity as unconcealed as the most gently nurtured belle of the Bluegrass. Thomas Henderson, a young scholarly minister, superintendent of Choctaw Academy, an Indian school established by Colonel Johnson on his Great Crossings farm, had charge of their education.

"I soon discovered," he later wrote, "such uncommon aptness in these two girls to take learning, and so much decent, modest and unassuming conduct on their part, that my mind became much enlisted in their favor."¹⁹

When General Lafayette visited Kentucky in 1825, he went out of his way to pay his respects to Colonel Johnson and spent a night as his guest at "Blue Springs." A young farm boy of the neighborhood, Ebenezer Stedman, has left a brief, colorful record of all he saw on that memorable afternoon when he went with the "Imence croud of People to the Blew Spring, the Residence of Richard M. Johnson. Such a gethering of the People. He had cannon at the Spring & Commenced firing Long Before we Reached there. Evry thing that was necsary for the occasion was prepared in fine order. Johnsons Two Daughters they Played on the piano fine. They Ware Dressed as fine as money Could Dress them & to one that Did not no they ware as white as anny of the Laydes thare & thare ware a good many."²⁰

Of course, it was inevitable that the domestic life of Colonel Johnson should become a sordid issue in the vicious politics and gangrenous journalism of that era.

On November 29, 1832, the *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, chief organ of the Whig party in the West, carried under bold headlines "MARRIAGE EXTRAORDINARY," a lurid account of the recent wedding between a "white man" and the "FAIR AND LOVELY" Adaline Johnson, a "mulatto girl reputed and acknowledged daughter of the Honorable Richard M. Johnson." "This is the second time," declared the *Observer & Reporter*, "that the moral feelings of that part of the people of Scott County, who possess such feelings, have been shocked and outraged by the marriage of a mulatto daughter of Col. Johnson to a white man, if a man who will so far degrade himself, who will make himself an object of scorn and detestation to every person who has the least regard for decency, can be considered a man."

Henceforth until his election as Vice-President in 1836, and so long, in fact, as Colonel Johnson held political office, the Whigs would center their fire on his octoroon mistress and his daughters. When the Trenton, New Jersey, *Emporium* concluded a eulogistic editorial on Johnson with the rhetorical

query: "What hand, when he dies, will be worthy to write his epitaph?" the *Kentucky Tribune* of Danville replied: "If he expires in his wife's gentle embrace, we will try our own hand at the epitaph—thus: 'Died in the Wool'.'"²¹

When on one occasion the Jacksonian press reminded the Whigs that similar attacks had been made upon "the great and good Jefferson," the *Louisville Journal* quickly pointed out a sharp distinction. "Like other men," said editor George D. Prentice, "the author of the Declaration of Independence had his faults, but he was, at least, careful never to insult the feelings of the community with an ostentatious exhibition of them. *He* never lived in open intercourse with an 'odoriferous wench'; *He* never bribed 'his white fellow citizens' to 'make such beasts of themselves' before the open eyes of the whole world as to stand up in the church, grasp the sable paws of negresses and pronounce the sacred vows of wedlock."

Then the indignant Prentice—who was not above a little quiet "blood pollution" himself, having been accused more than once of "disowning his own"—closed his diatribe by saying: "If Col. Johnson had the decency and decorum to seek to hide his ignominy from the world, we would refrain from lifting the curtain. His chief sin against society is the publicity and barefacedness of his conduct, he scorns all secrecy, all concealment, all disguise."²²

However, "secrecy" or "disguise" was not a part of "Old Tecumseh's" nature. Subjected to the foulest scurrility for acknowledging the paternity of "mulatto bastards," taunted and reviled because he had affectionately reared these "mongrel daughters," giving them an education "equal or superior to most females in the country"—though, as the Reverend Mr. Henderson declared, "no attempt has ever been made to impose them on society"—he seemed outwardly oblivious to the flood of vilification and personal abuse that swirled about his snow-thatched head. Calmly he went his way without retort or comment of any kind.

But the abuse broke Adaline's heart, and when she died on the eve of her famous father's election to the second highest

office within the gift of his countrymen, Colonel Johnson sadly wrote Henderson from Washington:

I thank you & all who administered to that lovely and innocent child in her final and awful hour. She was a source of inexhaustible happiness and comfort to me. She was mild and prudent. She was wise in her counsel beyond her years & obedient to every thought & every advice of mine. In her whole life I do not recall that she ever did an act that ever ruffled my temper. She was a firm & great prop to my happiness here—but she is gone where sorrow & sighing can never disturb her peaceful & quiet bosom. She is happy, and has left me unhappy in mourning her loss, which perhaps I ought not to do; knowing what a happy change she has made.²³

It was such experiences as these that made Mary Todd thoroughly familiar with every aspect of slavery. Moreover, for ten years before coming to Springfield she had lived in the very midst of bitter controversy on the subject. As we have seen in a previous chapter, Robert Wickliffe was the leader of the radical proslavery faction, while two of her father's personal and political friends, Robert J. Breckinridge and Cassius M. Clay, were spokesmen for those who favored emancipation. The ashen face of poor Charlie Wickliffe—Fayette County's earliest victim of this tragic strife—would never be blotted from her memory.

In the spring of 1830 a series of strong antislavery articles signed "B" appeared in the columns of the *Reporter*.²⁴ They came from Breckinridge's brilliant pen and excited such violent discussion that two months later he was forced to withdraw as a candidate for the legislature and to retire from politics at the early age of thirty.²⁵ But his efforts had not been altogether in vain, for on September 6, 1831, a few slaveholders met in Lexington and formed a society pledged to the emancipation of the future offspring of slaves at the age of twenty-one.²⁶ This action, coming as it had from slaveholders themselves, threw the whole community into a turmoil such as had never been known before. Proslavery leaders pictured to the alarmed populace the hideous specter of a servile insurrection, while the emancipationists contended that all the furor was but a thinly

veiled attempt on the part of the slavocracy to suppress public discussion and a flimsy excuse for the infliction of a more galling discipline on the Negroes.

As bitterness, suspicion, charges, and recrimination increased, the Lexington jails were filled with slaves indicted for various offenses: murder, rape, arson, burglary—all punishable by death. For fifteen years prior to 1831 no Negro had been executed in Fayette County, but now excited juries, swayed by the passion and prejudice of the hour, inflicted the extreme penalty with terrifying frequency. On August 13, 1831, four slaves convicted of separate offenses were hanged from the same scaffold in the yard of Megowan's jail.²⁷

Finally, however, out of this social travail had come the Nonimportation Act, passed by the General Assembly of Kentucky in 1833 after nearly five years of bloodshed. This law prohibiting slaves from being brought into the state for purposes of sale,²⁸ with severe penalties for its violation, dealt a heavy blow to the slave trade. Its passage was a signal victory for the friends of gradual emancipation. Yet at the same time it rang the death knell to peace in Kentucky for many a day on the subject of slavery. Henceforth the proslavery element, always led by Robert Wickliffe, waged unceasing warfare against what they contemptuously called the "Negro Law." Time after time, bills for its repeal would be presented to the legislature and sometimes passed by the Senate, only to be regularly defeated in the House.

So it was that the woman who married Lincoln through her girlhood experiences in Lexington was peculiarly fitted to share in the great task which would make her husband immortal. She had been taught every phase of the great question, which finally came to be nearest his heart, by the very man whom her husband regarded with the most profound admiration. She knew what Lincoln himself probably did not then know: that frequent maltreatment and even gross brutality was an inseparable part of the institution of slavery, even where it existed in the mildest form.

Grist to the Mill

MANY persons who knew Abraham Lincoln intimately have borne testimony to his fondness for newspapers. One authority has gone so far as to say that they were the "most potent influence that ever came into Lincoln's life in Illinois."¹ Lincoln's habit of reading newspapers had been acquired back in the early days when he kept the post office at New Salem. Patrons were often slow in calling for their mail, and the postmaster entertained himself with the *Louisville Journal* and other publications that came to the office. After Lincoln went to Springfield, local newspapers were available at his law office, and regularly he read others on the exchange table of his friend, Simeon Francis, editor of the *Sangamo Journal*.

It was not, however, until his marriage to Mary Todd that Lincoln had regular access to a southern journal. The newspaper that then began coming to the Lincoln residence was the *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, published semiweekly in his wife's home town.² The politics of the *Observer* suited the Lincolns exactly. It was an uncompromising Whig, a stanch supporter of Henry Clay, and a friend of Robert S. Todd.

Gallant Harry of the West was in the Senate of the United States, and Todd, having served more than twenty years as clerk of the Kentucky House of Representatives, was now a member of that body from Fayette County.

Henry Clay had been Lincoln's idol since boyhood.³ A biography of the Kentucky statesman was one of the few books that he had read back in Indiana. He had studied Clay's speeches⁴ and was in complete accord with his views on internal improvements, the tariff, slavery, and other public questions of the day. Only a few weeks before his marriage Lincoln, as a member of the executive committee of the local "Clay Club," had extended an urgent invitation to the Sage of Ashland to visit Springfield.⁵ The *Observer* was as completely devoted to politics as any newspaper ever printed, and Lincoln now had an opportunity to follow the most minute activities of the great Whig leader.

Lincoln was also interested in the personal and political fortunes of his father-in-law. In the autumn of 1843 Todd had visited Springfield, where for the first time he met the tall, angular husband of his daughter Mary. Lincoln had found him a kindly, genial man much concerned over the welfare of his children and their families. On that occasion Todd had assigned to his son-in-law several claims which merchants in Illinois owed him for cotton goods furnished them from his factory at Lexington. He had also given Mrs. Lincoln eighty acres of land near Springfield and had arranged to provide Mary and her husband cash advancements of \$120 per annum, which continued until Lincoln was firmly established in his law practice.⁶

Mary was fond of reading aloud, and many were the evenings she read the stirring events in the "home" paper while Lincoln listened soberly, his chair tipped back against the chimney jamb in the living room, his feet encased in huge, black velvet carpet slippers on the vamps of which Mary had painstakingly embroidered "A.L."⁷ Slavery agitation was raging fiercely in Kentucky, with Lexington as the storm center. Robert Wick-

liffe and Robert J. Breckinridge, not only opponents on the slavery question but bitter personal enemies, were engaged in a series of vitriolic debates on the Negro Law, which appeared in the columns of the *Observer*. The speeches of Breckinridge were being published in pamphlet form at the expense of Henry Clay, Robert S. Todd, and other friends, and widely distributed from Todd's store in Lexington.⁸ Mary's husband must have enjoyed the terse, scintillating eloquence of Breckinridge, whose declaration that "the highest of all rights is the right of a man to himself" now sounds so strikingly Lincolnian.

The Old Duke's son, Robert Wickliffe, Jr., was a candidate for Congress against Garret Davis, who was being warmly supported by Robert S. Todd, Henry Clay and his cousin, Cassius M. Clay, and other stanch Whigs of Lexington.

Young Wickliffe and "Cash" Clay had shortly before fought a duel, exchanging shots without effect, and had, as Clay said, "left the ground enemies as we came."

At the beginning of his speeches Wickliffe would read a letter purporting to quote the statement of a Woodford County citizen which reflected upon his opponent, without informing his audience that the person quoted had issued a handbill in emphatic denial. On several occasions Clay, in the absence of Wickliffe's opponent, had interrupted Wickliffe and called attention to the unmentioned handbill. After this had happened a few times, Wickliffe sent for his relative, Samuel M. Brown, a post-office agent, who then lived or had his office in New Orleans. Brown was a fearless, quick-tempered, dangerous man of great physical strength—overbearing in politics—and reputed to have had "40 fights and never lost a battle."

Following receipt of his kinsman's appeal for help, Brown was soon on the ground and in secret conference with certain members of the Wickliffe clan at the Dudley House. It was agreed that if Clay interrupted the speaking next day at a barbecue near a large spring that emerged from a limestone cavern called Russell's Cave, Brown would lead an attack upon him with "a crowd of desperate bullies," already alerted. Armed

with a "six-barrelled" pistol, he declared as he left the lobby of the Dudley House that if Clay opened his mouth at the barbecue, he "would blow his damned brains out."

Wickliffe began his speech at three o'clock. Again he repeated the controverted statement, and again Clay, standing on the outskirts of the crowd, interrupted, citing Captain Jesse's denial.

"Sir," exclaimed Brown in menacing tones, "that is not true. Capt. Jesse said no such thing."

"You lie," Clay retorted.

"You are a damned liar," shouted Brown, rushing Clay from the front, while a gang of "roughs" seized him from behind, mauling him severely. Someone struck him a heavy blow on the head with a club, numbing an arm and dazing him momentarily. "Clear the way and let me kill the damn rascal," ordered Brown.

The crowd fell back. Clay found himself in an open space—Brown standing some fifteen feet away with his "six-barrelled" pistol leveled at his breast.

Forced to "run or be shot," Cash chose not to run. Drawing his bowie knife, he turned his left side with his left arm covering it so as to present as "thin a target" as possible and advanced upon his adversary. Brown waited until his intended victim was almost within arm's reach and then fired. Distinctly feeling the "shock of the ball just under the left rib" and realizing that he could be shot five more times in quick succession, Clay "closed on" Brown before he could shoot again and "cut away in good earnest" with fierce thrusts of his knife that laid his enemy's skull open to the brain, cut off an ear, and dug out an eye. In another instant the proud hero of "40 fights" was thrown over a low stone wall and rolled ignominiously down the bluff into the dark waters of Russell's Cave.⁹

Clay was immediately rushed by his friends into a nearby house and stripped to the waist in search of his wounds. To their amazement it was discovered that the ball from Brown's pistol had struck the silver-lined scabbard of the bowie knife

and, being deflected, had lodged harmlessly in the back of Clay's coat, leaving only a red spot just over the heart.¹⁰

At the next term of the Fayette Circuit Court, Cassius M. Clay appeared in response to an indictment which charged him with assaulting Samuel M. Brown with intent to kill and "being arraigned, plead not guilty, and for his trial put himself upon God and his country."¹¹ The case had attracted no little excitement throughout Kentucky because of the connection of its participants with the slavery controversy, and the Lincolns doubtless felt more than a casual interest in the accounts of the trial which filled the columns of the *Observer*. Henry Clay had emerged from retirement as a criminal lawyer to defend his kinsman, who was also represented by his brother-in-law, John Speed Smith, an uncle of Joshua Speed, Lincoln's early and most intimate friend. Robert S. Todd and Deputy Sheriff Waller Rodes, Mrs. Lincoln's cousin, were witnesses for the defense.

It was the theory of the prosecution that Clay and his anti-slavery Whig friends had gone to Russell's Cave with the deliberate intention of breaking up a peaceful Democratic meeting. On the other hand, the defense stoutly contended that Brown, Wickliffe, Professor Cross of the Transylvania medical school, and Ben Wood, a policeman, had conspired to assassinate the defendant; that Clay acted solely in self-defense; and that only the prompt and vigorous use of his bowie knife had prevented the execution of the conspiracy. The weight of the evidence seemed to be with the defendant, but the jury was known to be proslavery almost to a man. The defense strove desperately to confine the testimony to the charge in the indictment, excluding politics and all other outside issues, but in this they were not wholly successful.

It was a dramatic moment in the historic old courthouse when at the conclusion of the evidence the tall form of Henry Clay rose to address the jury. Every seat in the circuit courtroom was taken. Men and women crowded the aisles and stood with craning necks out in the corridors. Old men leaned for-

ward on their canes and cupped tremulous fingers about their ears to catch once more the sonorous cadences of that familiar voice. It had been forty-five years since "the Mill Boy of the Slashes," a stranger just arrived from Virginia, without even a friend to introduce him to the court, had been sworn in "upon his own motion" as a member of the Lexington bar.¹² From that day Clay had lost few criminal cases, though it was now freely predicted by those who knew the popular feeling against his client that the twelve men in the jury box would never return a verdict in favor of the defendant.

But the old gladiator seemed fully equal to the occasion as he calmly buttoned his long frock coat across his breast and began to speak to the jury in an easy conversational tone. The editor of the *Observer* noted that "'age had not withered nor custom staled the infinite variety of his genius;' there was a fire in his eye, elation in his countenance, a buoyancy in his whole action that bespoke the most complete confidence in the outcome of the trial." For more than two hours Clay addressed the jury with all the persuasive eloquence of his long experience as an advocate. "Standing, as he did, without aiders or abettors, and without popular sympathy, with the fatal pistol of conspired murderers pointed at his heart, would you have had him meanly and cowardly fly?" he asked at the close in thundering tones. "Or would you have had him do just what he did do—there stand in defense or there fall?" And then, rising to his full height and turning partly toward the defendant, with the most pathetic voice, broken but emphatic, he exclaimed: "And, if he had not, he would not have been worthy of the name he bears!"¹³

After Mr. Robertson, the prosecutor, had made the closing appeal for the commonwealth, the jury retired, deliberated an hour, and then filed slowly back through the waiting throng to the jury box. Judge Richard A. Buckner peered over his spectacles at the twelve men in front of the bench. "Have you reached a verdict, gentlemen?" he asked, as he sternly rapped for order.

"We have, your Honor," replied Foreman Sam Patterson, holding up a folded slip of paper which the sheriff handed to the clerk.

"We the jury find the defendant not guilty," read the clerk. There was a moment's silence, then scattering applause, quickly drowned by hisses, muttered threats, shuffling feet, and the sharp voice of Judge Buckner ordering the sheriff to "empty the courtroom." The antislavery forces had won their first victory in Lexington, and Henry Clay had achieved perhaps his greatest courtroom triumph.¹⁴

During the months that followed the trial of Cassius M. Clay, Lincoln found in the columns of the *Observer* ample evidence to support his conviction that "no man was good enough to govern another." Among the runaway slaves advertised for were:

Jerry, rather spare, slow of speech when spoken to, of black complexion and one or two of his upper teeth knocked out.

Polly, a likely yellow woman, whose fingers on her right hand are drawn toward the palm from a burn.

William, [who has had] one of his legs broken and it is now somewhat twisted, which produces an impediment in his walk.

A negro man named Henry, commonly called "Sir Henry," who has the marks of a recent scald on the left cheek, neck and ear, the whole being scarcely yet healed.

Jesse, a dark mulatto, 45 years old, a small piece bit off one of his ears, a scar on one side of his forehead, and his right shoulder bone had been broken.¹⁵

The keeper of the slave jail announced that there had been apprehended and was now in his custody a "sprightly young mulatto wench" who said her name was "Callie," with a "brand on the cheek, forehead and breast resembling the letter 'H'." Also a "stout black boy, Mose, who has a burn on his buttock from a hot iron in shape of an 'X' and his back is much scarred with the whip." And "Alex, who has his ears cropped and has been shot in the hind parts of his legs."

A resident of Lexington had for sale "a Likely Negro girl,

fifteen years of age." A gentleman wished to purchase for his use a few "Young Men and Women." Another offered "a negro woman well acquainted with house business, about thirty years old, and occasionally fond of a dram." And on a certain county court day at the public auction block an owner would sell "Four Negroes, a woman, and her three children: a boy 9, a girl 7 and a boy 4. They will be sold separately if desired."

Then there came an afternoon in early May, 1843. Nearly two thousand people were assembled on Cheapside. The wealth and culture of the Bluegrass were there, as well as ladies and gentlemen from Cincinnati, Louisville, Frankfort, and as far south as New Orleans. Ordinarily a slave sale was an event that attracted only casual interest, usually attended by prospective purchasers and a few idle bystanders. But today a dense mass of humanity swarmed about the old, rickety auction block at the southwest corner of the courthouse yard, and the public square was filled to overflowing with men and women in fashionable attire.

Two persons stood on the block: one was the auctioneer in a long swallow-tailed coat, plaid vest, and calfskin boots, with a white beaver hat on the back of his head; the other was a beautiful young girl with dark lustrous eyes, straight black hair, and a rich olive complexion, only one sixty-fourth Negro. She was white, yet a slave, the daughter of her master, about to be sold by his creditors to the highest and best bidder. Reared as a house servant in a home of wealth and culture, Eliza had acquired grace, poise, education, and other accomplishments most unusual in one of her station. Those who were selling her had taken no chances on her escape. For more than a week she had been confined in a filthy, crowded, vermin-infested slave pen with maimed and twisted pieces of humanity like William and Callie and Mose, and now she stood trembling and disheveled, staring with wide, frightened eyes into the upturned faces of that curious throng.

With his hand clutching the girl's shrinking shoulder, the

auctioneer addressed the crowd in businesslike tones. Here was a sprightly wench, such as never before had been offered at a public sale. She was skilled in all the household arts, dependable, trustworthy, and amiable in disposition. In the most insinuating tones he emphasized her exquisite physique and then called loudly for bids.

"How much am I offered for the wench?" he inquired in a harsh voice. The bidding started at two hundred fifty dollars. Rapidly it rose by twenty-fives and fifties to five hundred—seven hundred—a thousand dollars. When twelve hundred was reached only two bidders remained in the field: Calvin Fairbank, a young minister who had just recently come to town, and a short, thick-necked, beady-eyed Frenchman from New Orleans.

"How high are you going?" asked the Frenchman.

"Higher than you, Monsieur," replied Fairbank.

The bidding went on, but slower—more hesitant—smaller. The auctioneer raved and pleaded. "Fourteen hundred and fifty," said Fairbank cautiously. The Frenchman was silent. The hammer rose—wavered, lowered—rose again—then the flushed and perspiring auctioneer dropped his hammer and jerked Eliza's dress back from her white shoulders, exhibiting to the gaze of the crowd her superb neck and breast.

"Look here, gentlemen!" he shouted, "who is going to lose such a chance as this? Here is a girl fit to be the mistress of a king!" A suppressed murmur of horror ran through the crowd. Women turned away and tried to leave. Exclamations of anger were heard on every side. But the man on the block, callous from experience, was not to be intimidated. He knew his rights: that under the law the weeping, cringing creature at his side was a chattel and nothing more.

"Fourteen sixty-five," ventured the Frenchman.

"Fourteen seventy-five," responded the preacher.

There was another frenzied appeal for bids, but none came, and it seemed that the contender from New Orleans was

through. Sickened at the spectacle, the crowd was melting away when suddenly the auctioneer "twisted the victim's profile" to the dazed and incredulous audience and "lifting her skirts, laid bare her beautiful, symmetrical body from her feet to her waist."

"Ah, gentlemen," he exclaimed, slapping her naked thigh with a heavy hand, "who is going to be the winner of this prize?"

"Fourteen hundred and eighty," came the Frenchman's voice feebly through the tumult.

The man on the block lifted his gavel. "Are you all done? Once—twice—do I hear any more? Thr-e-e." The high bidder stood with a smile of triumph on his swarthy features. Eliza, knowing who the preacher was, turned an appealing, piteous face in his direction.

"Fourteen eighty-five," said Fairbank.

"Eighty-five, eighty-five—eighty-five; I'm going to sell this girl. Are you going to bid again?"

The Frenchman shook his head. With a resounding thud the hammer fell, and Eliza crumpled down on the block in a swoon.

"You've got her damned cheap, sir," said the auctioneer cheerily to Fairbank. "What are you going to do with her?"

"Free her," cried Fairbank, and a mighty shout went up from the dispersing crowd led, surprisingly, by the great pro-slavery advocate, Robert Wickliffe, in whose carriage Eliza and her new owner drove to the house of a friend while her "free papers" were being made out.¹⁶

The sale of Eliza sorely taxed the allegiance of central Kentucky to its favorite institution and provoked wide discussion and comment.¹⁷ The emancipationists held it up as a hideous example of the barbarous slave code, while the opposition rather feebly contended that it was a most extraordinary incident, an extreme case never likely to occur again. And so the discussion went on for months until the approaching presidential campaign absorbed public attention.

\$150 REWARD.

RANAWAY from the subscriber, on the night of Monday the 11th July, a negro man named

TOM,

about 30 years of age, 5 feet 6 or 7 inches high; of dark color; heavy in the chest; several of his jaw teeth out; and upon his body are several old marks of the whip, one of them straight down the back. He took with him a quantity of clothing, and several hats.

A reward of \$150 will be paid for his apprehension and security, if taken out of the State of Kentucky; \$100 if taken in any county bordering on the Ohio river; \$50 if taken in any of the interior counties except Fayette; or \$20 if taken in the latter county.

july 12-84-tf

B. L. BOSTON.

REWARD FOR RUNAWAY SLAVE. *Lexington Observer & Reporter*



SLAVE AUCTION ON CHEAPSIDE

The year 1844 was a momentous one for Lincoln. Things were happening down in the Bluegrass State that would expand the area of his activities and give him more than state-wide prominence. The battle-scarred Harry of the West was sounding the call to faithful followers for a last desperate assault upon the citadel of the Presidency. Twice before in years gone by, the great prize had slipped through his fingers. Now the Whigs of the nation with boundless enthusiasm were gathering for the fray, thrilled as of yore by the unabated magnetism of their old leader.

The *Observer* carried in large bold type at the head of its editorial column names already familiar to Lincoln, and one that he would come to know better: Henry Clay for President of the United States; William Owsley for governor; Archibald Dixon for lieutenant governor, who ten years later introduced the Kansas-Nebraska Bill that brought Lincoln out of political retirement; and Robert S. Todd for state senator.

From the first of May until the election in November the *Observer* contained almost nothing but politics. The activities of Senator Todd in behalf of Henry Clay were particularly noted. "His argument exceeded anything ever before heard on the subject," said the editor. "It was extremely sound and lucid. He was frequently interrupted by the hearty applause of the delighted audience."¹⁸ Clay remained quietly at his country seat, while column after column of the newspaper was devoted to his views on the question of the day and intimate sketches of his home life at "Ashland." Here, as nowhere else, could Lincoln obtain intimate glimpses of his "beau-ideal of a statesman," and in these pages he saw also the faraway but ominous gestures toward disunion.

A number of editorials discussed the resolution presented by citizens of Edgefield, South Carolina: "That the President of the United States be requested by the general convention of the slave states to call Congress together immediately; and the alternative distinctly presented to the free states, either to admit Texas into the Union, or to proceed peaceably and

calmly to arrange the terms of the dissolution of the Union."¹⁹ To this Clay with all his old-time vigor made ringing reply that must have stirred Lincoln's blood.

It was interesting to observe the attempts of the Democrats to place the Whig candidate in much the same position into which Lincoln himself maneuvered the agile Douglas fourteen years later. Clay was called an abolitionist in the South, while his political enemies charged him with proslavery sentiments in the North.²⁰ The *Observer* of June 5, 1844, carried certified statements from several persons of prominence who declared that years before in the debate on the Missouri Compromise, Clay had said: "If gentlemen will not allow us to have black slaves, they must let us have *white ones*; for we cannot cut our firewood, and black our shoes, and have our wives and daughters work in the kitchen." Clay denied this charge in dignified but emphatic language and closed his reply as follows: "I have no desire to disparage the industry of the wives of any of the certifiers to the extract, nor to boast of that in my own family, but I venture to say that no one of them performs more domestic industry with their own hands than my wife does at Ashland." And yet, according to the *Observer* of July 24: "Mr. Wickliffe abused Mr. Clay in the most violent manner. He stated that Mr. Clay was at the head of abolitionism in the United States, and that he assisted in stealing all the negroes that have run off from this state."

Meanwhile, Lincoln, as one of the Whig electors for his state, actively took the stump for his hero.²¹ Day after day he engaged his old surveying instructor, John Calhoun, Stephen A. Douglas, and other Democratic orators in joint debates which carried him to nearly every part of the state and "excited much popular feeling." Toward the close of the campaign, he crossed the Wabash into Indiana and spoke at Rockport and other places near the home of his boyhood. It was at Gentryville that his early friend, Nat Grigsby, entered the room in the midst of his speech and Lincoln recognized him instantly. "There is Nat!" he exclaimed, halting suddenly in

his remarks, and "striding from the platform," he pushed eagerly through the crowd until he reached the modest Nat and grasped him by the hand. Then, as though no interruption had occurred, he returned to the platform and finished his speech. That night Grigsby and Lincoln slept together at the home of the village storekeeper, where the presidential elector from Illinois "commenced telling stories and talked over old times" until nearly dawn.²²

During the latter part of August public attention at Lexington was diverted for a moment from politics to a local tragedy that was doubtless of interest to the Lincoln household. Mrs. Caroline A. Turner, who had outraged the community several years before by the brutal treatment of her slaves, had never reformed. Her husband, Judge Fielding L. Turner, before he died in 1843 had stated in his will: "I have some slaves. I give them to my children. None of them are to go to the said Caroline for it would be to doom them to misery in life and a speedy death."²³

The said Caroline, however, had renounced the will and obtained several of these Negroes, including a coachman named Richard, who was described as a "sensible, well-behaved yellow boy, who is plausible and can read and write." A short while thereafter, on the early morning of August 22, Mrs. Turner was flogging Richard with her usual zest and severity when the boy, with superhuman strength born of agony, broke the heavy chains that bound him to the wall, seized his mistress by the throat, and strangled her to death with his bare hands. In the midst of intense excitement Richard was arrested, thrown in jail, quickly indicted, and rushed into trial for the murder of Caroline A. Turner. Few seemed now to remember her cruelties that had created such widespread indignation a few years before. The very attitude of the press toward the case was a revelation of how blind the public was to the iniquity of slavery.²⁴

Probably a dozen Negroes had died at the hands of Caroline

Turner. Her own death had occurred under circumstances which, if they did not exonerate the slayer, ought to have at least reduced the homicide to "killing in sudden heat and passion," which was not a capital crime in Kentucky. The defendant bore an excellent reputation, was quiet, peaceable and inoffensive. But the right of a slave to self-defense was a mere legal fiction. It would never do to admit that a bondman under any circumstances could ever take the life of his master or mistress—not even to save his own—and escape the gallows. Such, according to the indictment, was "against the peace and dignity of the Commonwealth of Kentucky."

So on September 23, 1844, Richard was led handcuffed into court by Lincoln's cousin, Sheriff Waller Rodes, went through the formality of a trial, and was promptly found guilty of murder in the first degree. On November 19 at eleven o'clock Sheriff Rodes pulled a wooden trigger, and Richard plunged feet first through the narrow trap door of the scaffold in the jail yard and, obedient to the judgment of the court, "hung by the neck until dead."²⁵

Wherever he went, Lincoln found his candidate assailed by the Democrats or Locofocos with amazing virulence. From the stump, the press, and pamphlets came venomous thrusts at not only the public career, but the private life of Henry Clay.²⁶ Affidavits from Robert Wickliffe averred that "Mr. Clay has been in the habit of playing cards for money for many years back, at watering-places, on steamboats, and at private houses." Several congressmen recalled that in 1838 on the exciting question of the contested seats of the Mississippi members Clay had come over from the Senate to watch the votes in the House of Representatives and was standing close to the speaker's chair. The vote was a tie, and as Speaker Polk then cast his vote in the affirmative, "Henry Clay, looking directly at the Speaker with an expression and a gesture we shall never forget, exclaimed, 'Go Home, God damn you, where you be-

long!' " Thomas Montague remembered that about a year before, he had been present at a sale of Thomas H. Clay's effects in Lexington, and that Henry Clay, exasperated at the low prices being bid for his son's property, "swore very loud and said, 'I do not care a God Damn whether the creditors get a damn cent of their debts or not, if they stand by and see the property sacrificed.' "27

Clay's enemies further called attention to his duel with Humphrey Marshall, his encounter with John Randolph, and his part in "the murder of the lamented Cilley" by William J. Graves. They pointed out that he was even then under bond in the District of Columbia to keep the peace toward William R. King, United States minister to France and formerly senator from Alabama, and that, although sixty-seven years old, "covered with grey hairs," when recently asked whether he would fight a duel at his age, Clay had replied: "I can not reconcile it to my sense of propriety, to make a declaration one way or the other."28 To all this flood of hypocritical abuse the Whig press and stump speakers like Lincoln made vigorous reply, and the *Observer* thundered its heaviest broadsides29 in editorials styled: "Mr. Clay and His Revilers." As election day approached, the Whigs redoubled their efforts on behalf of the national ticket. Enthusiasm and confidence in an overwhelming victory at the polls were boundless, and no follower of Henry Clay in all the nation was more absorbed in the contest than Abraham Lincoln.

At Lexington, barbecues were held under the giant trees of the Bluegrass woodlands, where that delectable concoction known as "Kentucky burgoo"—almost every kind of vegetable with dozens of chickens, pheasants, squirrels, rabbits, quail—stewed in huge iron kettles, whole shoats and lambs roasted on revolving spits, beeves baked in trenches under the hot fire of seasoned oak and hickory were served on dozens of wide tables each forty feet long. The Clay Club, with ornate banners presented by the ladies, led by its grand marshals, Levi

O. Todd and Jesse Bayles, marched in cheering torchlight processions to Cheapside, where they were addressed by various Whig orators.

On September 30 Calvin Fairbank, the Methodist preacher who had sprung into notice through his dramatic purchase of the slave girl Eliza, was arrested with Miss Delia Ann Webster, a young New England schoolteacher, principal of the Lexington Female Academy, on a charge of assisting slaves to escape, and the pair was lodged in Megowan's jail. It was charged that Fairbank and Miss Webster had taken three Negroes—Lewis, a waiter at the Phoenix Hotel, and his wife and child—in a hack to Maysville where they were ferried across the Ohio River to freedom.³⁰ Public indignation was intense. Fairbank, heavily ironed, was thrown into the dungeon of the jail in solitary confinement. Miss Webster was given quarters in the "Debtor's Room." Israel, the old Negro hack driver, was stripped to the waist and after more than fifty lashes on his bare back confessed that he had driven the carriage which conveyed the prisoners and the runaway slaves from Lexington to Maysville.³¹

The northern press in favor of Polk seized upon this incident as another opportunity to embarrass Mr. Clay further. Two days before the election the *Ohio Coon-Catcher*, a Loco-foco publication at Columbus, bitterly attacked the Whig candidate, charging that Fairbank and Miss Webster "are imprisoned, ironed and manacled within sight of the shades of Ashland," and called loudly to all abolitionists to vote against Clay.

On Saturday night, November 2, the presidential campaign closed at Lexington with a "grand Procession, with Torch Lights, Transparencies, etc." Whig leaders from many parts of the United States were present to participate in the final demonstration. Through the early hours of the evening the mammoth parade—Clay Clubs, fraternal orders, the military and citizens with blaring bands—marched and countermarched along the streets of the town, winding up at the public square where "Balloon & Fireworks" were set off, and standing be-

neath a brilliantly illuminated Liberty Pole, Henry Clay made a short, graceful speech of gratitude and encouragement.

The election was held on November 4, 5, and 6. Both Lincoln and his wife were tremendously concerned over the result—Mary even more anxious, if possible, than her husband for the success of her old friend. Without rapid means of communication the contest remained in doubt for days. The *Observer* of November 13 announced that the result seemed to hinge on the state of New York, that only the returns from New York City and a few river counties were in, and that they were “strongly indicative that the state has given her thirty-six electoral votes to Mr. Clay.” But it was not to be. In a few days news came that Polk had carried the Empire State by a narrow margin, and Mrs. Robert S. Todd, knowing the anxiety of the Lincoln household, sat down and wrote Mary a graphic description of how Clay had taken his defeat.

The Todds and Clay and his wife were attending the wedding of a near relative of Clay. The party was composed of only intimate connections and friends, all of whom were Whigs and anxiously awaiting final news of the election. The New York mail was due in Lexington about ten o'clock that evening.

As the hour approached for the arrival of the mail [wrote Mrs. Todd], I saw several gentlemen quietly leave the room, and knowing their errand, I eagerly watched for their return. As soon as they came in the room I knew by the expression of each countenance that New York had gone Democratic. The bearers of the news consulted together a moment, then one of them advanced to Mr. Clay who was standing in the center of a group, of which your father was one, and handed him a paper. Although I was sure of the news it contained, I watched Mr. Clay's face for confirmation of the evil tidings. He opened the paper and as he read the death knell of his political hopes and life-long ambition, I saw a distinct blue shade begin at the roots of his hair, pass slowly over his face like a cloud and then disappear. He stood for a moment as if frozen. He laid down the paper, and, turning to a table, filled a glass with wine, and raising it to his lips with a pleasant smile, said: “I drink to the health and happiness of all assembled here.”

Setting down his glass, he resumed his conversation as if nothing had occurred and was, as usual, the life and light of the company. The contents of the paper were soon known to every one in the room and a wet blanket fell over our gaiety. We left the wedding party with heavy hearts. Alas! our gallant "Harry of the West" has fought his last presidential battle.³²

The defeat of Henry Clay was a great disappointment to Abraham Lincoln.³³ Though twice before the Sage of Ashland had tasted the bitter dregs, there had always been hope for the future. Now his decisive defeat by Polk convinced Lincoln with Mrs. Todd that his old political idol had run his last race; that no man who did not actively espouse the cause of slavery could be elected President of the United States.³⁴ The campaign, however, had been a decided success for Lincoln personally. His influence as a Whig leader was no longer confined to Sangamon County. It had spread even beyond the boundary of the state, and he seemed about to achieve his highest ambition to be, as he confided to a friend, the "De Witt Clinton of Illinois."³⁵

The True American

CASSIUS Marcellus Clay was a unique and the most picturesque antislavery advocate in Kentucky. Born on a fine Bluegrass plantation in a magnificent old mansion of native granite, gray limestone, and red brick laid in Flemish bond, a son of the largest slaveholder in the state, he espoused the cause of emancipation at an early age, and by the time of his graduation at Yale College he was thoroughly steeped in the doctrines of William Lloyd Garrison.

He was a man of striking appearance and enormous physical strength: tall, handsome, big-boned, broad-shouldered, virile, graceful, with dark flashing eyes, a heavy shock of black hair, and a rich, sonorous voice which resembled that of his distinguished kinsman. He was generous, frank, and polite to all, and even gentle among his friends, in spite of a hot temper that sometimes warped a usually sound judgment.¹ Possessed of a restless energy that never flagged, an iron will that rode roughshod over all obstacles, utterly fearless, and fiercely combative when aroused, Clay was eagerly accepted into that small group of emancipationists who had so long been intimidated

by the aggressive supremacy of the slave power in Kentucky.

To Mary Lincoln and her sisters in Springfield, Cash Clay seemed like a member of their own family. They had known him intimately since they were children, when he, while a student at Transylvania, came to live in the Todd home following the fire that destroyed the main building and dormitories of that institution in 1829.² Several years later Clay had married Mary Jane Warfield, an intimate friend of the Todd girls, and young Mrs. Edwards, the oldest sister, was matron of honor at the wedding.

Since 1840 Cassius M. Clay had been the stormy petrel of central Kentucky politics, and old friends in Illinois had followed his tempestuous career through heated controversy and bloodshed. While Lincoln certainly did not agree with all his views on slavery, nor frequently in the manner of their presentation, the two were in hearty accord on the principle expressed by Lincoln in characteristic language when he said: "Clay, I always thought that the man who made the corn should eat the corn."³

The year 1845 found Clay fully prepared to launch a fresh attack on slavery in Kentucky. Late in January he published in the local papers and also in pamphlet form an address: *To the People of Kentucky*. He argued that the institution of slavery was both morally and economically wrong. He pointed out that land in Ohio, though much inferior in fertility to the soil of Kentucky, was higher in market value because of free labor, and that slaveholders would benefit economically from emancipation, even without compensation.

Population is sparse, and without numbers there is neither completion nor division of labor, and, of necessity, all mechanic arts languish among us. Agriculture drags along its slow pace with slovenly, ignorant, reckless labor. A loose and inadequate respect for the rights of property follows in the wake of slavery. Dueling, bloodshed and Lynch-Law leave but little security to person. A general demoralization has corrupted the first minds of the nation, its hot contagion has spread among the whole people; licentious-

ness, crime and bitter hate infest us at home; repudiation and the forcible propagandism of slavery is arraying against us the world in arms. I appeal to history, to reason, to nature and to conscience, which neither time nor space, nor fear, nor hate, nor hope of reward, nor crime, nor pride, nor selfishness can utterly silence—are not these things true?

And then he closed with an eloquent appeal:

Italian skies mantle over us, and more than Sicilian luxuriance is spread beneath our feet. Give us *free labor*, and we shall indeed become the garden of the world! But what if not? Man was not created only for the eating of Indian meal; the mind—the soul must be fed as well as the body. The same spirit which led us on to the battle-field, gloriously to illustrate the National name, yet lives in the hearts of our people. They feel their false position, their impotency of future accomplishment. This weight must be removed. *Kentucky must be free!*

As the weeks went by, Clay found it increasingly difficult to obtain space in the Lexington newspapers. His last card, which the editor grudgingly consented to publish, seemed temperate enough. "Although no man is more sensible than I am of the evils of slavery," wrote Clay, "it has never been consistent with my real feelings or ideas of true policy to deal in indiscriminate denunciation of slaveholders. One may very well feel acutely the violations of general principles and, yet deeply sympathize with the self-made victims of error—the man who inflicts evil is more to be pitied than one who suffers it. Such, at least, is my own experience."⁴ The editor of the *Observer*, while a conservative slavery man, had always kept his columns open to the advocates of emancipation. But Clay's articles were so "militant and provocative" in tone that in "the interest of the public peace" he declined further articles for publication.

The intrepid Clay, however, had foreseen such a possibility, and being a man of independent fortune, he now set about the execution of a long-contemplated plan to start a newspaper of his own. He was fully aware of the dangers that confronted

such an undertaking. He remembered very well the experience of James G. Birney who, having attempted in 1833 to start an antislavery newspaper, the *Philanthropist*, at Danville, was threatened with murder and banished from Kentucky. There were many who warned him of a similar fate.

In our judgment [said the *Observer*] Mr. Clay has taken the very worst time that he could to begin the agitation of this great and delicate question, even for the accomplishment of his object, since it is an admitted truth that the fanatical crusade which has been waged by Northern Abolitionists against the institution of slavery, which never in any degree concerned them, has produced a state of feeling in the minds of slaveholders anything but propitious to the slave or his liberation. . . . We make these remarks not to discourage Mr. Clay, for we know very well that his ardent and enthusiastic temperament never sees an obstacle in his way, and we do not know anyone whom under other circumstances we should welcome to the Editorial Corps with more cordiality than Mr. Clay, but to apprise him in advance, that, from our observation and reflection, he is embarked in a very hopeless undertaking.⁵

However, in spite of the misgivings of his friends and the mutterings of the slavocracy, Clay calmly and cautiously set about his task. He selected for his printing establishment the second story of a brick building near the corner of Main and Mill streets. He lined the outside doors with heavy sheet iron. The only approach to the office, a steep, narrow stairway, was guarded by two brass four-pounder cannon mounted behind folding doors and loaded with Minié balls and nails. The office was also equipped with a stand of rifles, several shotguns, and a dozen Mexican lances. As a last extremity Clay provided an avenue of escape through a trap door in the roof and means whereby he could touch off several kegs of powder, secreted in one corner of the room, which would blow up the office and its invaders.⁶

On June 3, 1845, *The True American*, a weekly newspaper, with "God and Liberty" in bold type over the date line, made its appearance on the streets of Lexington. Three hundred Kentuckians and seventeen hundred subscribers from other

states greeted the new champion of freedom with warm enthusiasm, while Horace Greeley, editor of the New York *Tribune*, acclaimed it "The first paper which ever bearded the monster in his den, and dared him to a most unequal encounter."

Just how many copies of *The True American* went to Springfield, where probably a dozen of the editor's early friends resided, will never be known. The proposed publication of an avowed antislavery organ in Kentucky had attracted intense interest throughout the country, and nowhere more than in Lincoln's own city. Its complete prospectus had appeared in several issues of the *Sangamo Journal*, and Lincoln could not help but endorse that portion of the announcement which stated that "a number of Kentuckians, slaveholders and others, propose to publish in the City of Lexington a paper devoted to gradual and constitutional emancipation. . . . It is not proposed that our members should cut loose from their old party associations. The press under our control will appeal *temperately but firmly* to the interests and the reason, not to the passions, of our people. . . . But our readers shall not be our masters—if they love not truth they may go elsewhere."⁷

Although Lincoln and Clay at this time had never met, the latter was certainly known to Lincoln, not only as an old friend of the Todd family, but as a vigorous, fearless, antislavery leader, whose personal encounters had been vividly described from time to time through the columns of that regular Lexington visitor to the Lincoln household. Lincoln was familiar with the tragic, futile effort of Elijah Lovejoy to establish an antislavery press in free territory at Alton, Illinois, in which he lost his life. Now he had an opportunity to observe public reaction to such a newspaper published within the very threshold of the institution and among its stoutest defenders.

There was no mistaking the position of *The True American* on the great question of the day. It was the "avowed and uncompromising enemy of slavery." Its views were stated fully and frankly, though sometimes in language not altogether temperate. It was in favor of the liberation of slaves by "constitu-

tional and legal means," and not otherwise; Congress had no power to interfere with slavery where it was already established without the "legitimate consent of the states. The addition of new slave states or a slave territory to this Union, is unconstitutional and impossible."⁸

But Clay's modest four-page sheet was received with scowls of hostility throughout the Bluegrass. Suppression by force was darkly hinted at. Such proposed action, however, was at first emphatically rejected by the cooler element of the community. On June 7 the *Observer* condemned editorially the suggestion that "It would be right to demolish by violence Mr. Clay's press," saying:

If there be an instance on record where a resort to Mob Law has been justifiable in a civilized country, we know not where to look for it. At the same time, we must take occasion to say, without entering into a controversy on the subject, that we think Mr. Clay's enterprise utterly impracticable if not quixotic. The *time* and the *mode* are, in our judgment, wrong—radically, fundamentally wrong. It matters not what a man's views about slavery may be. There is a fitness in things—a propriety in action, which ought never to be disregarded by a considerate man.

Within a few short weeks Abraham Lincoln saw in the situation at Lexington ample confirmation of the opinion which he had expressed in 1837, that "The promulgation of abolition doctrines tends rather to increase than to abate" the evils of slavery. Broad­sides from *The True American* were answered by heavy volleys from the usually conservative *Observer*, and newspapers from other states, both north and south, took up the fight.

Finally, on July 16 the *Observer* carried at the top of its editorial column "An Appeal to the Slaveholders of Fayette":

It is time, full time that slaveholders of Fayette should have *peace*—that their rights and their security should no longer be a football to be kicked to and fro by unprincipled political jugglers and office-seekers. Whenever an impudent political schemer in politics wishes to make a breeze, he begins at once to bawl out about

slavery, abolition, emancipation, . . . until by the *agitation* of a most delicate subject he creates a little excitement and reaps some political profit out of it. Slaveholders of Fayette, is it not now time for you to act on this matter yourself, and as conventions are all the fashion at this time, hold one yourself?

Since we penned these lines, we have looked over the *New York Tribune*, deeply tinctured with abolition tendencies, and were struck with the following paragraph:

"Nothing Like Discussion—Among the evidences that C. M. Clay's *True American* is exerting a strong influence in Kentucky is the fact that other papers opposed to his course are under the necessity of answering his arguments and thus aiding to produce that wholesome moral agitation which will be sure to result in Triumph of Liberty over Slavery. If we were in a slave state, we should draw great encouragement from this sign of the times, believing with a very shrewd observer, that slavery is an institution in every way so bad that it matters little what people say about it if they will *only keep talking*. It is only in an atmosphere of silence and stagnation that the friends of slavery can hope to perpetuate its existence!"

Aye, play into his hands, you wicked agitators, or if we must be *charitable*, you ignorant numbskulls. Horace Greeley, the editor of the *Tribune*, is a shrewd man, and we are almost irresistibly drawn to the conclusion that these Locos are engaged in this thing of *agitation*, "wholesome agitation," as Greeley calls it, for the very purpose of overthrowing the institution. Beware of them, slaveholders! Beware of them!

Public resentment against the antislavery course of Clay's newspaper was soon reflected in the attitude of candidates for office. Garret Davis and the gifted but erratic Tom Marshall, rival candidates for Congress, were holding a heated series of joint debates throughout the old Ashland district. Both candidates were loud in their denunciation of *The True American* and its editor. To clamorous requests that he state his position on slavery and the repeal of the Negro Law, which since 1833 had prohibited the bringing of slaves into Kentucky as merchandise, Marshall responded in resounding phrases from a platform erected in the courthouse yard at Lexington:

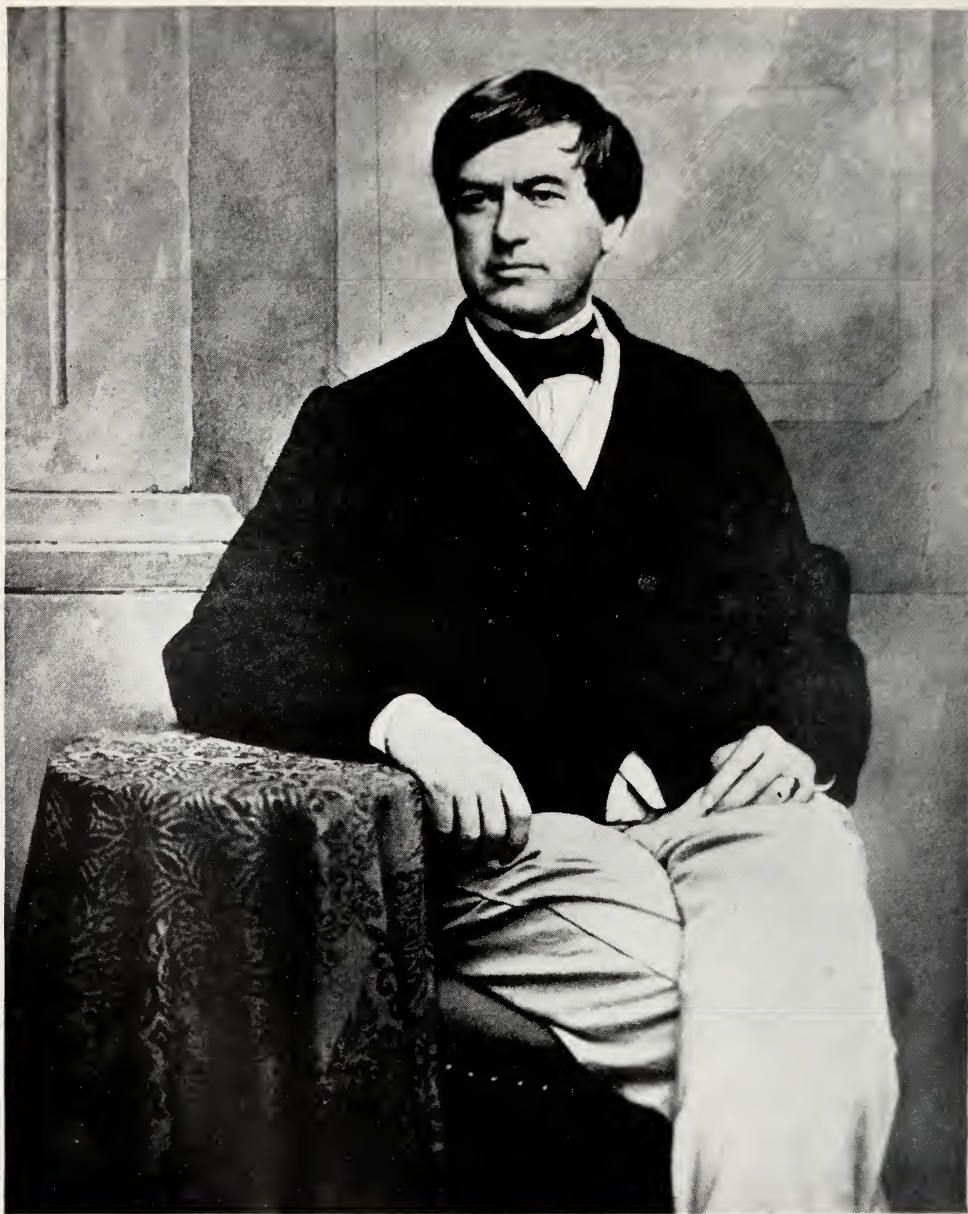
I answer now, I am not in favor of Abolition of slavery in Kentucky. I believe, in the first place, that there is no government on earth armed with the constitutional power to effect this object, and if there was I would resist its exercise. . . . The abolition of slavery in the United States involves more than a civil or political or social revolution. It is not mere prejudice of race or caste, a despotic prejudice founded in injustice and upheld by power, which the Abolitionist seeks to destroy. He aims at a revolution in nature and the moral structure of the species, unauthorized alike by physical or intellectual laws. I might wish to see it effected when it shall please the Creator to wash out the mark he has branded on the African's brow, to obliterate the all-enduring monument of past wrong, the pledge of eternal hate, the badge of physical inferiority and past servitude that dooms the African and his descendants while among us to be a slave, protected by the benevolence or interest of his master, or an outcast shielded by no laws, linked with no sympathy, the miserable victim of a prejudice incurable, because founded in the nature of things; or a stern, desperate domestic foe, burning with hate, panting for revenge—armed with the power of freedom, yet stripped of all its most precious blessings and advantages.

The idea of citizenship and equality, a Democratic society in Kentucky and Virginia compounded of liberated African negroes and the descendants of European chivalry, the races kept, too, forever distinct, is an absurdity too monstrous for Abolitionism itself. Eternal war, war to extermination of slavery or amalgamation of the races are the three alternatives. Shield me and mine from that philanthropy which would blend the crystal eye, the elevated features, the rosy skin, all the striking and glorious attributes that mark the favorites of nature, exhaling fragrance and redolent with beauty and of bloom, with the disgusting peculiarities, the wool and grease and foetere of the blackened savage of the Southern deserts.⁹

But the editor of *The True American* unhorsed the "hybrid candidate" for Congress with a single, well-planted blow. Much to Marshall's discomfiture, Clay quoted "the apostate Whig's" *Letters to the Commonwealth*, written several years before in opposition to the repeal of the Negro Law at a time when he



ONE OF THE BRASS CANNON USED IN THE DEFENSE OF THE
TRUE AMERICAN OFFICE



CASSIUS M. CLAY

was not "a beguiling candidate for office." In his denunciation of slavery Marshall had then drawn a pathetic picture of slavery's blighting effect on his native state:

I have said that I consider negro slavery as a *political misfortune*. The phrase was too mild. It is a cancer—a slow, consuming cancer—a withering pestilence—an unmitigated curse. . . . There is but one explanation of the facts I have shown. There is but one cause commensurate with the effects produced. The clog which has stayed the march of the people, the incubus which has weighed down her enterprise, strangled her commerce, kept sealed her exhaustless fountains of mineral wealth, and paralysed her arts, manufactures and improvements is *Negro Slavery*. This is *the cancer* which has corroded her revenues, laid waste her lowlands, banished her citizens, and swallowed up her productions—this is the magazine, the least approach to which, fills her with terror. This is the slumbering volcano which will bear no handling. The smallest breath to fan, the slightest threat to stir its sleeping but unextinguished fires, drives her to madness. Oh! Well might she curse the tyrant who planted this Dark Plague Spot upon her virgin bosom!¹⁰

Lincoln's father-in-law was the Whig candidate for the state Senate against Colonel Charles C. Moore, a virulent, proslavery Independent, whose platform was the repeal or nullification of the "Iniquitous Negro Law." And by July the slavery issue, fanned to white heat by the presence of *The True American*, reached a stage where the Whig leaders greatly feared wholesale desertion of their proslavery constituents to the Democratic camp. Robert S. Todd was in danger of defeat at the hands of his dashing and vociferous opponent, who proclaimed a militant hostility to all enemies of slavery, the colonel boldly charging that Todd had been nominated by the emancipation wing of his party and that his record in the legislature proved him to be "no friend of the institution."

With this aspect of the campaign growing more serious every day, Todd's friends prevailed upon him to write a card which was published in the *Observer*. He would not repudiate

his stand on the Negro Law, even to save himself from political death. "Having been present during its discussion," he said, "(though not as a member) I was in favor of its passage, and have been uniform and steadfast in its support, believing, as I sincerely do, that it is founded on principles of sound policy." But with a view, no doubt, of placating his proslavery constituents Todd closed his brief statement with the declaration: "I am a slaveholder. Were I an abolitionist or an emancipator in principle, I would not hold a slave."¹¹

The card was undeniably weak on the vital issue, and Colonel Moore said so in no uncertain terms. But the *Observer*, with an eye toward the wavering members of its party, sought to bolster up the halfhearted announcement by editorial comment: "Mr. Todd meets these questions like a man and a statesman. He is no abolitionist in any sense of the term—he is the owner of slaves himself and is determined, so far as lies in his power, that the rights of the slaveholder, as guaranteed by the constitution, shall be protected."¹²

Notwithstanding all this, the proslavery champions continued their campaign against Todd. Robert Wickliffe wrote "a long lecture to the people of Fayette County" which appeared in the columns of the *Gazette*. "Twice or thrice," said he, "has this Abolition Club (the Clay Club of Lexington) ordered the election of the salaried President of the Bank of Kentucky, and the majority has obeyed." And Todd replied to his old enemy in a sizzling card which was published both in the *Observer* and in pamphlets.

Mr. Wickliffe in his fit of malice and desperation, seems to imagine every man, except himself, an abolitionist, and he has, as I have heard, indulged the belief that Queen Victoria and her ministers, at their leisure moments, are plotting to steal away his three hundred slaves! . . . But Fellow Citizens [said Todd in conclusion] with all the loathing that an upright man can feel towards an habitual and notorious falsifier, an unscrupulous and indiscriminate calumniator, reckless alike of fame, of honor, and of truth, I must now take my present leave of this miserable old

man, and express to you my regret that to justify myself against his unprovoked assaults, unfounded charges and illiberal insinuations, I have been reluctantly compelled, in this manner and at this time, to trespass on your patience.¹³

Two weeks before the election Wickliffe issued a bitter rejoinder in the form of a handbill entitled: "To the Freemen of Fayette." As to Todd's card:

He begins by telling you that I am actuated by malice towards him personally. This is ever the charge of the weak and vicious. It is untrue and none other than a craven spirit would condescend to use it. It is thus he meets the facts which I have furnished to the people showing that he is not a desirable representative. If there are personal differences between Mr. Todd and myself, that does not prove that while he was active as President of the Branch Bank of Kentucky, he did not, as a member of the Legislature for Fayette, assist in getting the Bank released from paying into the Treasury \$20,000 a year, . . . nor that in this whole matter he did not play the part of Bank President and Legislator, in a bargain between the state and the corporation, where the interests of the two were irreconcilable, and in which the bank gained and the state lost.

Wickliffe replied to several other charges in the Todd card and then concluded: "Mr. Todd chooses to insinuate that I acquired my wealth by dishonesty. This insinuation is a base and infamous falsehood. This calumny was first uttered by Robert J. Breckinridge, whose slander merchant Mr. Todd is, and how he fared for it, the public has seen. . . . In my old age I have been assaulted by the basest calumnies and foulest abuse, but while I live I will discharge my duties to my country as steadfastly as I did in bygone days against more formidable adversaries."¹⁴

The election was held August 4, 5, and 6. It was a time of great anxiety to those conservative Whigs who realized that the paramount issue of the campaign was slavery and that their candidate for the Senate was far from acceptable to the radical wing of the party. On Wednesday, the third day of the elec-

tion, the Democrats were leading by a narrow margin, when the Sage of Ashland emerged from his retirement and made the rounds of the polling places with Robert S. Todd in an open barouche, "fresh in health and buoyant in spirits with his ready joke and laugh, among his farmer friends." This strategy had the desired effect and did much to save the day. The mere sight of their beloved chieftain rallied the disheartened Whigs, and Todd and the rest of the ticket were elected by safe majorities. But the result was a costly victory for Henry Clay, as the following night an incendiary seeking revenge crept into his "Bagging Factory & Rope Walk" and burned the large plant, containing fifty tons of hemp, to the ground.¹⁵

The election was over. The radical proslavery element that sought the repeal of the law which prohibited breeding and traffic in slaves as merchandise had been defeated, and the disgruntled leaders began to look about for the cause. *The True American* was now some nine weeks old, and many believed that the contaminating influence of Cash Clay's newspaper was responsible for the result at the polls.

With the appearance of each issue the temper of the populace had become more and more inflamed. Threats had been made both anonymously and in the open against the life of the editor. One of the communications, scrawled in blood, read:

C. M. Clay:

You are meaner than the autocrats of hell. You may think you can awe and curse the people of Kentucky to your infamous course. You will find when it is too late for life, the people are no cowards. Eternal hatred is locked up in the bosoms of braver men, your betters, for you. The hemp is ready for your neck. Your life can not be spared. Plenty thirst for your blood—are determined to have it. It is unknown to you and your friends, if you have any, and in a way you little dream of.

Revengeurs.¹⁶

It cannot be said that Clay had always acted with discretion during the short, stormy career of *The True American*. Headstrong, quick-tempered, a master of withering invective, he had

dared a thing that no other man had ever accomplished. He had grappled with the overwhelming forces of slavery in their own citadel, giving no quarter and asking none. The undertaking, to have had the faintest chance for success, was one that called for tact, patience, and foresight. Yet the result would have been the same, perhaps not so soon, but eventually, even for a man much better poised than he. And so, as the days went by and public excitement grew, the end of *The True American* came in sight.

Worn out by the nerve-racking struggle, on July 12 Clay was stricken with typhoid fever and lay for weeks in packs of ice. During his illness several friends undertook the publication of the newspaper, but their blundering, well-meaning efforts only made matters worse.¹⁷ On August 12 *The True American* published a long, carefully prepared article by "one of the very first intellects in the Nation," who, as stated, was also the owner of many slaves:

Slaveholders particularly [said the article in part] must look to and obey the progress of the times, and adopt all the ameliorating measures possible in the economy and management of their slaves. They should regard them as human beings and Christians, and spare the lash and all degrading punishments. They should hail the progress of public opinion, and aid in lifting the slave into comfort and self-esteem. That goes to raise them from dirt, vermin, and horrid hovels to good beds, clean cabins, wholesome and abundant food and decent, comfortable clothes. That goes to educate them, gives them religion and fits them for future usefulness and citizenship.

It is vain for the master to try to fence his dear slaves in from all intercourse with the great world, to create his little petty and tyrannical kingdom on his own plantation, and keep it for his exclusive reign. He can not shut out the light of information any more than the light of heaven. It will penetrate all disguises and shine upon the dark night of slavery. He must recollect that he is surrounded. The North, the West, the South border on him. The free West Indian, the free Mexican, the free Yankee, the more than free Abolitionist of his own country. Everything trenches on his infected district, and the wolf looks calmly in upon his fold.

This article and an editorial of like tenor in the same issue were the sparks that touched off a rock-shivering blast of popular indignation. The pent-up feelings of the community—the hatred, suspicion, and bitterness engendered by the Fairbank Negro stealing, the recent battle at the polls, and the publication of an “abolition” newspaper under the very nose of the slavocracy—now broke loose in a fury.

About three o'clock on the afternoon of August 14 Clay heard that a meeting of citizens who favored the suppression of *The True American* was in progress at the courthouse. Though weak and emaciated from his long illness, he crawled out of bed, put on his clothes, buckled on his bowie knife, drove downtown, and staggered into the courtroom just as the meeting began.

Some thirty men were there when he arrived, and they peremptorily demanded that he cease the publication of his “fire-brand” at once. Smarting from the fresh wounds of his recent defeat for Congress, Thomas R. Marshall then launched into a speech in which he charged that Cassius M. Clay had “assassinated” the peace and good order of the community. Lying prostrate upon a bench, Clay denounced the “apostate Whig,” and though scarcely able to speak above a whisper, demanded a hearing. This was ignored and the meeting adjourned.

Several hours later a committee of three came to Clay's home and delivered to him, as he lay on his bed, an ultimatum that he “discontinue the publication of the paper called *The True American*, as its further continuance in our judgment, is dangerous to the peace of our community, and to the safety of our homes and families.”

The communication closed by saying: “We owe it to you to state that, in our judgment, your own safety, as well as the repose and peace of the community are involved in your answer.”

Clay immediately dictated an emphatic reply which was both a refusal to comply with the committee's request and a

challenge. "Your advice with regard to my personal safety," he said, "is worthy of the source whence it emanated, and meets with the same contempt from me which the purpose of your mission excites. Go tell your secret conclave of cowardly assassins that C. M. Clay knows his rights and how to defend them."

The news of the committee's visit and the editor's defiant reply to its demand spread swiftly and by suppertime was all over town. That evening the impending crisis was the sole topic of conversation. Little groups of citizens discussed it until a late hour from the comfortable depths of the huge hickory rocking chairs on the sidewalk in front of the Phoenix Hotel, while others stood talking in low tones on the street corner near the Clay residence, where a light shone dimly through the trees from the sickroom window. And the Lexington correspondent to the *Sangamo Journal* at Springfield sat down and wrote that newspaper:

During the whole of to-day the popular excitement was very high. Many anticipated that the meeting of three P.M. would tear down the office of *The True American*. The meeting for Monday will be tremendous. What it will do I am of course unable to say. It may postpone ultimate action, but I think the almost universal impression is that it will resolve itself into a committee for the redress of grievances and demolish *The True American* office, though everybody understands that the editor will have to be killed first, and that he is somewhat difficult to kill. This is a most lamentable state of affairs. What effect the killing of C. M. Clay will have on the free states in exasperating the abolitionists and swelling the number, you can judge as well as I.¹⁸

Two days later the sick man gave out for publication a brief statement of his views on slavery. He did not sanction any mode of freeing the slaves contrary to the laws and constitution of the state of Kentucky; he was opposed to their admission to the right of suffrage. The idea of amalgamation and social equality was impossible and absurd. He did believe, however, that every female slave born after a certain day and year should be free at the age of twenty-one. After the expiration of thirty

years the state should provide a fund for the purchase of the existing generation of slaves, and thereafter human slavery should be forever at an end.

Little attention, however, was paid to this declaration. Apparently the argumentative attitude of the editor only served to feed the flames. On Saturday, August 16, handbills were issued to the "People of Lexington and Fayette County," calling for the suppression of *The True American* and announcing a mass meeting of citizens for the following Monday. Runners were dispatched with these posters to be distributed in adjoining counties.

Meanwhile, Clay made preparations as best he could for a last desperate stand. The excitement of the past week and his trip to the courthouse had caused a grave, half-delirious relapse, but with a dogged courage that had carried him through many precarious situations he gave orders for battle to a handful of chosen friends. The two brass cannons were loaded afresh with nails and Minié balls and sighted so that the deadly canister would rake the double sheet-iron doors breast high. Rifles and shotguns were fitted with new percussion caps, and the shafts and points of the Mexican lances carefully tested. Clay made his will and sent his camp bed down to the office.

The enemies of *The True American*, however, were working from many angles. They realized that Clay had the legal right to resist the invasion of his office, and none knew better than they that any attempt to molest the printing establishment would result in bloodshed. Consequently, a plan was devised to seize the plant under process of law, and on the early morning of Monday, August 18, the day of the mass meeting, Judge Trotter of the police court, quietly and without notice or any opportunity for the editor to be heard, issued an injunction against *The True American* office and all its appurtenances. The city marshal, armed with a writ of seizure, then appeared at Clay's bedside, and on demand from the officer, the sick man yielded up his keys, turned over on his pillow, and wept bitterly.¹⁹

On that same morning, at eleven o'clock, a crowd of twelve

hundred men, unaware of the secret court proceedings, assembled in the courthouse yard. They were addressed by the man whom Clay had so scornfully dubbed the "apostate Whig," who harangued the crowd for more than an hour.

In the preparation and establishment of his office in Lexington, Mr. Cassius M. Clay acted as though he were in an enemy's country [exclaimed Marshall, after a graphic recital of many grievances against the Abolition newspaper]. He has employed scientific engineers in fortifying against attacks, and prepared the means of destroying the lives of his fellow citizens, it is said, in mines of gun-powder, stacks of musket and pieces of cannon. The whole course of the man bears evidence incontestable that he was entering upon a career fatal to the peace of the community of which he was a member. . . . Such a man and such a course is no longer tolerable or consistent with the character or safety of this community.

With the power of a press, with education, fortune, talent, sustained by a powerful party, at least abroad, who have made this bold experiment in Kentucky through him, the negroes might well, as we have strong reason to believe they do, look to him as a deliverer. On the frontier of slavery, with three free states fronting and touching us along a border of seven hundred miles, we are peculiarly exposed to the assaults of Abolition. The plunder of our property, the kidnapping, stealing and abduction of our slaves, is a light evil in comparison with *planting* a seminary of their infernal doctrines in the very heart of our densest slave population. . . .

Mr. Clay has complained in his recent handbills of his indisposition, and charged the people as deficient in courage and magnanimity in moving upon him when he is incapable of defense. If all that be said of him, his purpose, and his means, be true, his indisposition is fortunate. He may rest assured that they will not be deterred by one nor 10,000 such men as he. He cannot bully his countrymen. A Kentuckian himself, he should have known Kentuckians better. His weakness is his security. We are armed and resolved—if resistance be attempted, the consequence be on his own head. For our vindication under the circumstances, we appeal to Kentucky and to the world.

At the conclusion of his speech, Mr. Marshall offered the following resolutions, which were unanimously adopted:

Be it resolved by the Assembly:

First: That no Abolition press ought to be tolerated in Kentucky, and none shall be in this city or its vicinity.

Second: That if the office of *The True American* be surrendered peaceably, no injury shall be done to the building or other property. The presses and printing apparatus shall be carefully packed up and sent out of the state, subject then to Mr. C. M. Clay's order.

Third: That if resistance be offered, we will force the office at all hazards and destroy the nuisance.

Fourth: That if an attempt be made to revive the paper here, we will assemble.

Fifth: That we hope C. M. Clay will be advised. For by our regard to our wives, our children, our property, our country, our honor, wear what name he may, be connected with whom he may, whatever arm, or party here or elsewhere may sustain him, he shall not publish an abolition paper here, and this we affirm at the risk, be it of his blood, or our own, or both, or of all he may bring, of bond or free, to aid his murderous hand.

Sixth: That the chairman be, and he is hereby, authorized to appoint a committee of sixty of our body who shall be authorized to repair to the office of *The True American*, take possession of the press and printing apparatus, pack up the same, and place it at the railroad office for transportation and report forthwith to this body.²⁰

The chairman then appointed sixty men from the crowd, who proceeded promptly but quietly to Number 6, Mill Street, where to their surprise they found the city marshal with Clay's keys, which he surrendered to them after a "formal protest." By nightfall the rooms on the second floor of the building were dismantled and the press and paraphernalia of *The True American* packed up and carted to the depot en route to a destination beyond the border of slave territory.

The most violent denunciation by northern newspapers followed the "outbreak of the mob at Lexington," and Lincoln's *Sangamo Journal* published a lurid, exaggerated account of the final proceedings: "We understand that the 'choice spirits' consisted of about one hundred and fifty men, wearing black masks to conceal their features (this was modest at all events,)

and calling themselves 'the black Indians'—that they made loud noise through the streets of Lexington, maltreated many negroes, and, besides tarring and feathering several in the public square, broke the ribs of one man, the hands of another, and so injured the eye of a third that the poor fellow will lose it. What will the people at large think of these proceedings?"²¹

The action of the committee of sixty was, of course, stoutly defended by the *Observer*. "Men may write books as they please to prove that this was a *lawless* procedure and in utter violation of the principles of the Constitution and laws by which our rights and property are protected. It will avail nothing. There may be a state of things in which Constitutions and laws are totally inadequate to the public protection from dire calamities and, in that event, popular action (though usually to be deprecated) must be excused."²² In sharp contradiction of the version printed in the *Sangamo Journal*, it congratulated the community upon "the rare spectacle of an innumerable body of citizens, meeting as a matter of course with highly excited feelings, yet so far subduing and moderating their spirit as to accomplish their purpose without the slightest damage to property or the effusion of a drop of blood."²³ But as criticism of the outside press grew louder and more rabid, the local paper lost its temper and exclaimed: "Howl on, ye wolves! Kentucky is ready to meet and repel your whole blood-thirsty piratical crew!"²⁴

However, in the midst of all his troubles Clay was more widely known and warmly appreciated elsewhere than he knew. In April, 1846, William H. Seward, former governor of New York, soon to be United States senator from that state, later candidate for President and then secretary of state in the cabinet of Abraham Lincoln, visited Lexington on his western tour.

Coming in from Maysville by stagecoach over a turnpike "of great smoothness and beautiful curves," the passengers at the beginning of the trip rode on the outside of the lumbering vehicle. "Having heard so much of the beauty of the environs of Lexington," Seward wrote back home, "I persevered in keep-

ing my outside place through a heavy rain, which greeted us as we entered the town." Spreading beeches and maples grew everywhere, and the woodlands were "embellished with flowering trees, the white blossoms of the buckeye and the dogwood, of the wild cherry and the wild plum, mingled with the brilliant purple clusters of the Judas-tree."

As the coach rolled down Limestone Street, the driver pointed out the house of Cassius M. Clay—an elegant stone cottage "embowered with shade trees and shrubbery" in the center of a "beautiful park."

Next morning Seward went to "Thorn Hill."²⁵ "A gentleman of thirty-five, fine, straight and respectable in his look, came forth in wrapper when I rang the bell." In a few minutes Seward and Cash Clay were fast friends.

When the Lexington visitor returned to his hotel, he found that Henry Clay had called and left a cordial invitation to visit "Ashland," which he did twice during his short stay in Lexington. But as the former governor penned a letter to his old political friend, Thurlow Weed, his mind was not on Henry but on Cash.

The name of Cassius M. Clay was never mentioned in Cincinnati without respect and affection. On entering Kentucky, it ceased to be pronounced at all in your ears, and if you allude to it, it comes back weighted with alarms, apprehensions and caviling. . . . I can only say of Cassius M. Clay that I found him all I desired he should be. . . . I found him so brave, so true, so kind. . . . I had feared he would be inflated with the praises he so deservedly receives in the free states, but I fear, on the contrary, that these scarcely sustain him against the injustice he suffers at home. He is frank, manly, unaffected and free from the peculiarities of disposition that spoil generally the advocates of Emancipation.

Seward concluded his letter with the observation that in Kentucky "slavery is seen in its least repulsive form. Kentucky is Virginia with the serpent in its youth. In Virginia it is full grown and gorged with the life blood of the Old Dominion."

During these eventful and turbulent months Abraham Lincoln had followed the "bold experiment" in Kentucky closely. It had provoked a broader and more varied discussion of slavery than he had ever known before. The best intellects, the most superb orators of his native state, had been arrayed against one another. Column after column, indeed whole pages, of the *Observer* had been devoted to the Marshall-Davis debates, and able though moderate antislavery articles by Dr. Bascom, president of Transylvania, answered by Robert S. Todd's opponent, Colonel Charles C. Moore. The fate of *The True American* verified a conclusion that had been growing upon Lincoln in recent years, that agitation of the slavery question in southern territory only served to solidify sentiment against even gradual emancipation.

A few weeks after the affair at Lexington, Lincoln wrote his first detailed statement of his attitude on slavery: "I hold it to be a paramount duty of us in the free states, due to the Union of the states, and perhaps to liberty itself (paradox though it may seem) to let the slavery of the other states alone; while, on the other hand, I hold it to be equally clear, that we should never knowingly lend ourselves directly or indirectly, to prevent that slavery from dying a natural death—to find new places for it to live in, when it can no longer exist in the old."²⁶

The Lincolns Visit Lexington

ON AUGUST 29, 1846, the *Lexington Observer & Reporter* announced that Abraham Lincoln, son-in-law of state senator Robert S. Todd, had been elected to Congress from Illinois. The result, however, of the recent election throughout the country was far from satisfactory to this stanch Whig organ. "We know that Locofocoism has swept the platter tolerably clean," it observed gloomily; "with the exception of Mr. Lincoln in Illinois, there is not as much Whig virtue and honesty as was required to save Sodom and Gomorrah."

Lincoln had been opposed in his race for Congress by Peter Cartwright, who had defeated him in his first campaign for the legislature, a militant, hard-hitting, Methodist circuit rider, the sworn enemy of slavery and whisky, twenty-four years older than the Whig candidate, and he had found the preacher a most formidable adversary. The canvass had been vigorous and colorful. The supporters of Cartwright called attention to the fact that Lincoln had married into an aristocratic family and that he had stated in a temperance speech at Springfield that drunkards were often as honest, generous, and kindly as

teetotalers and church members, and sometimes more so.¹ They industriously circulated reports that Lincoln was an infidel, and also that he was a "deist" who believed in God but did not accept the divinity of Jesus Christ nor the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

As further proof of his irreligious bent of mind they related how Cartwright was preaching one night at a place where Lincoln had made a speech that afternoon and, as the evening service began, the Springfield lawyer had quietly slipped into a pew at the rear of the church and sat listening attentively to his opponent's vehement denunciation of the devil and all his works. Near the end of the sermon the preacher had leaned dramatically across the pulpit and called upon all who expected to go to heaven to rise. All arose except Lincoln. Then Cartwright asked all who expected to go to hell to rise. Still Lincoln remained seated. Then with a resounding thump the circuit rider smote the lectern with a horny fist.

"I have asked all who expect to go to heaven to rise and all who expect to go to hell to rise," he exclaimed, "and now I should like to inquire, where does Mr. Lincoln expect to go?"

Lincoln rose slowly to his feet. He was obviously disconcerted by the sudden and pointed inquiry, but in a moment he had recovered himself, and with a twinkle in his deep gray eyes he drawled:

"I expect to go to Congress."²

When the ballots had been counted, Lincoln's majority was 1,511, exceeding the vote that had been cast for Henry Clay two years before by more than 500, but returns from the whole state showed that he was the only Whig candidate for Congress elected in Illinois.³

A few days later the new congressman-elect wrote the editor of the *Illinois Gazette* published in Lacon. He said that during the recent campaign he had been aware that "Mr. Cartwright was whispering the charge of infidelity" against him in the "Northern counties of the District."

"From the election returns in your county" (Marshall Coun-

ty and the adjoining county of Woodford being the only counties carried by Cartwright), Lincoln continued, "being so different from what they are in parts where Mr. Cartwright and I are both well known, I incline to the belief that he has succeeded in deceiving some honest men there," in spite of the fact that "Cartwright, never heard me utter a word in any way indicating my opinions on religious matters, in his life." Lincoln enclosed a little handbill which he had had printed shortly before the election but had not distributed. It was an answer to the charge that he was an "open scoffer at Christianity. . . . That I am not a member of any Christian Church is true," said Lincoln, "but I have never denied the truth of the Scriptures; and I have never spoken with intentional disrespect of religion in general, or of any denomination of Christians in particular." Furthermore, "I do not think I could myself, be brought to support a man for office, whom I knew to be an open enemy of, and scoffer at, religion. . . . If, then, I was guilty of such conduct, I should blame no man who should condemn me for it; but I do blame those, whoever they may be, who falsely put such a charge in circulation against me."⁴

Lincoln had realized his great ambition. He was to sit beneath the dome of the Capitol that had echoed the voices of Clay, Webster, and Calhoun, with his ancient rival, Stephen A. Douglas. Yet now that the contest was won, he felt little elation over the victory. "Being elected to Congress," he wrote Speed in Kentucky, "though I am very grateful to our friends, for having done it, has not pleased me as much as I expected."⁵

During the winter and early spring following his election Lincoln practiced law in desultory fashion and swapped doggerel poetry with a friend who lived in another county. He had written some crude and melancholy verses on the occasion of his return to his old home in Indiana during the Clay campaign. "I am not at all displeased with your proposal to publish the poetry, or doggerel, or whatever else it may be called, which I sent you," he wrote to his friend Johnston. His name, however, must "be suppressed by all means," for, said he, "I



MAIN STREET IN LEXINGTON AS LINCOLN SAW IT



SLAVE AUCTION IN THE COURTHOUSE YARD
From original negative in the Mulligan Collection



THE HOME OF ROBERT S. TODD, AS IT LOOKS TODAY

have not sufficient hope of the verses attracting any favorable notice to tempt me to risk being ridiculed for having written them.”⁶

Things were unusually dull around Springfield. Upon the declaration of war with Mexico many of the young men had marched away with Baker and Hardin and Shields into the country south of the Rio Grande. Although Lincoln with his party had opposed the declaration of war, now that hostilities had begun he urged vigorous prosecution to an honorable peace in a public address on May 30, 1847.

By the middle of October he had completed plans for the journey to Washington. It was arranged that Mrs. Lincoln and the two children should accompany him and that they would stop off at Lexington for a leisurely visit with the Todd relatives.⁷ This would be Mary’s first visit back home since she left in 1839, and although Robert S. Todd had visited Springfield, her stepmother and small half brothers and half sisters had never seen her tall, rawboned husband. So early Monday morning, October 25, Congressman Lincoln with his wife and two small boys—Bob, four, and Eddie, a year and a half old—climbed into the stage that carried them overland to St. Louis, where they boarded a steamboat for Louisville.⁸

“Mr. Lincoln, the member of Congress elect from this district,” said the Springfield *Illinois Weekly Journal* of October 28, “has just set out on his way to the city of Washington. His family is with him; they intend to visit their friends and relatives in Kentucky before they take up the line of march for the seat of government. Success to our talented member of Congress! He will find many men in Congress who possess twice the good looks, and not half the good sense, of our own representative.”

As the steamer plowed up the Ohio with the Indiana bank on one side and the wooded shoreline of old Kentucky, dressed in autumn coloring, on the other, Lincoln was among familiar scenes again. Recollections of his early youth must have crowd-

ed thick upon him: there was Thompson's Landing, where Thomas Lincoln and his little family had crossed the Ohio as they journeyed northward from Rolling Fork to their new home in the wilds of Indiana; here was the broad, sluggish mouth of Anderson Creek, where Lincoln had worked for six dollars a month and board on a ferry belonging to James Taylor; and Bates' Landing, where he had earned his first dollar for less than a full day's work when he sculled two travelers and their trunks out to a passing steamer; yonder on the high bank of the Kentucky shore stood the big log house of Squire Samuel Pate, where he had been arrested by John T. Dill, charged with the violation of a ferry privilege, and in the low-ceilinged room that faced the river had been tried and acquitted.⁹ At the Falls of the Ohio the slow-moving boat passed through the Portland Canal, where Lincoln and his stepbrother, John D. Johnston, had worked as day laborers for a short time in 1827.

The little party did not stop in Louisville, although Lincoln's intimate friend, Joshua Speed, lived near by, but caught the first train east, and as the poky little locomotive puffed up the winding grades toward the Bluegrass, Lincoln could not help marking the contrast between his first visit to Lexington and the present journey.

It was a raw, blustery November day when the Lincolns arrived at their destination. All was bustle and expectancy at the Todd home on West Main Street. Mammy Sally hurried Emilie and her two little sisters, Elodie and Katherine, into their crimson merino dresses, white kid boots, and ruffled white muslin aprons.

Presently, Mrs. Todd's nephew, Joseph Humphreys, bounded up the steps. He had ridden from Frankfort on the same train with the Lincolns without knowing who they were, walking the short distance from the depot while the Todd coachman hunted up the baggage of the guests he had come to meet.

"Aunt Betsy," said young Humphreys to Mrs. Todd, "I was never so glad to get off a train in my life. There were two

lively youngsters on board who kept the whole train in a turmoil, and their long-legged father, instead of spanking the brats, looked pleased as Punch and sided with and abetted the older one in mischief."

Just then he glanced out of the window at the sound of carriage wheels, and there in front of the house was the "long-legged" man and the two "brats."

"Good Lord, there they are now," he exclaimed, as he made a hasty exit, and the nephew from Frankfort was seen no more during Mary's visit.¹⁰

Lincoln, wearing a close-fitting cap and heavy ear muffs, got out of the barouche and assisted Mary and the children up the broad stone steps to the door of the wide hall thrown open to receive them. The greetings of that homecoming stamped themselves indelibly upon the memory of little Emilie.

The white family stood near the front door with welcoming arms and, in true patriarchal style, our colored contingent filled the rear of the hall to shake hands with the long-absent one and "make a'miration" over the babies. Mary came in first with little Eddie, the baby, in her arms. To my mind she was lovely; clear, sparkling blue eyes, lovely smooth white skin with a faint, wild rose color in her cheeks, and glossy light-brown hair, which fell in soft short curls behind each ear. She was then about twenty-nine years of age.

Mr. Lincoln followed her into the hall with his little son, Robert Todd, in his arms. He put the little fellow on the floor, and as he arose, I remember thinking of "Jack and the Bean Stalk," and feared he might be the hungry giant of the story—he was so tall and looked so big with a long, full, black cloak over his shoulders, and he wore a fur cap with ear straps which allowed but little of his face to be seen. Expecting to hear the "fe, fi, fo, fum," I shrank closer to my mother, and tried to hide behind her voluminous skirts. After shaking hands with all the grownups, he turned and, lifting me in his arms, said "So this is Little Sister." His voice and smile banished my fear of the giant.¹¹

For the next three weeks Abraham Lincoln enjoyed immensely the first real vacation of his life. The cotton mills of

Oldham, Todd & Company were in full operation with slave labor at the village of Sandersville on the Georgetown Pike, and Lincoln drove out there frequently with his brother-in-law, Levi Todd, assistant manager and bookkeeper of the concern. There were elderly people in Lexington who talked to Lincoln about his great-uncle Thomas.¹² John Keiser, venerable proprietor of the Bruen House tavern, remembered him and doubtless described the terrific thrashing that Thomas had administered to Peter Warfield in the yard of the Indian Queen nearly forty years before. From such sources Lincoln more than likely heard much about this kinsman, his domestic troubles and his ultimate ruin.

The days were full of visits to Mary's many relatives who lived in town and in the country. Grandmother Parker, to whom Mary had been deeply devoted since the death of her own mother, still lived in the fine brick mansion on Short Street, next door to the house where Mary was born, and here the Illinois congressman and his wife were always warmly received.

Lincoln was deeply impressed with this quaint, slaveholding old town with its fine estates and elegant mansions such as he had certainly never seen anywhere else. Near the very heart of the city were manor houses set back in landscaped gardens:¹³ "Alta Myra," belonging to John R. Cleary; "Babel," the residence of General Leslie Combs; Joel Johnson's "Castle Haggin"; Elisha Warfield's "The Meadows"; "Wickliffe House," owned by Robert Wickliffe, and Chief Justice Robertson's "Rokeby Hall."

With much leisure on his hands Lincoln now had an opportunity to study the institution of slavery at close range. In the homes of relatives and friends he saw contented servants, born and reared for generations in the families of their present masters, who served them with unswerving loyalty and devotion, and who in turn were held in genuine affection. It was apparent that the servants of the Todd household were privileged characters, while the aged Widow Parker was utterly dependent on her three old servants, Ann, Cyrus, and Prudence.

These Negroes under no circumstances would have accepted freedom from their beloved "white folks."

Yet Lincoln could see enough to know that even in Lexington slavery had its darker side. Many of the able-bodied white men of the town and county were absent with the army in Mexico. Most of the slaves on the smaller plantations were now under little or no restraint. The pilfering and other lawlessness among the Negroes, resulting from these changed conditions, had produced a vague, covert unrest that alarmed the timid and disturbed even the more levelheaded citizens of the community.

Cassilly, a slave girl, was under indictment for "mixing an ounce of pounded glass with gravy" and giving it to her master, John Hamilton, and his wife Martha. Another female slave was under sentence of death for having "mixed and mingled a certain deadly poison, to wit, the seed of the Jamestown weed pulverized in certain coffee," which she had given to her master, Hector P. Lewis, "knowingly, wilfully, feloniously of her malice aforethought, with the evil intent that death should ensue to the said Lewis."¹⁴ On the night of November 7 Mrs. Elizabeth Warren, an aged and highly respected woman, was murdered by persons thought to be slaves, and Mayor Henry offered a reward of \$500 for the capture of the perpetrators of the crime.

Elizabeth Humphreys told Mary and her husband what had happened to little Alec Todd, then as always Mary's favorite brother. The Todds had hired a slave girl named Celia from the Brands, who had bought her at auction in New Orleans, as a nurse for their small son. However, Elizabeth soon noticed that the little boy would "shrink and hold back" from Celia whenever she touched him. After Mrs. Todd had been informed about this by her niece, they "examined the little fellow's body time & again but never found a mark of any kind or a bruise."

One evening when Robert S. Todd and his wife were attending a party, Elizabeth sat reading in the back parlor with Alec snuggled contentedly by her side. Celia came in to put

him to bed, but "he drew back with such a look of horror and fear" that Elizabeth took him away from the girl, who by this time was very angry, put him on the sofa, and said that she would take him to bed when he got sleepy. Upon investigation the household was horrified to learn that the vicious young Negress, when she got the boy to his room, frequently grabbed him "by the feet and held him against the wall with his head down until he was fairly black in the face." Even now old Nelson clenched his fists and gritted his few remaining teeth, while Mammy Sally snorted and rolled her eyes in speechless indignation.¹⁵

The black locust whipping post erected in 1826 had so decayed that it was no longer fit for use, and the county court at a special session "ordered that the three-pronged poplar tree in the Court-House yard immediately North of the Barry monument be and the same is hereby established the public whipping-post of this county."¹⁶

The *Observer* was full of advertisements about runaway slaves. "Joshua," about forty years old, black, heavy set, with a scar on his neck, "who is slow of speech, with a slight choking when agitated and who professes to be a preacher," was being sought by his master. It was supposed that he had gone to Ohio, "where his wife (a free mulatto woman, named Martha Ann Skinner) has lately gone," and a reward of \$500 was offered for his arrest and confinement in jail. Sam F. Patterson was seeking "a mulatto slave named Anderson who has a rather downcast look when spoken to," and a black boy "named Ned, about twenty-five years old," had run away from his master, Neal McCann.¹⁷

And every time Lincoln picked up the local newspapers he saw the following notices in bold type:

Negroes for Sale.

35 negroes in lots to suit purchasers or the whole, consisting of field hands, house servants, a good carriage-driver, hostlers, a blacksmith, and women & children of all descriptions.

James H. Farish.

To Planters & Owners of Slaves.

Those who have slaves rendered unfit for labor by Yaws, Scrofula, Chronic Diarrhea, Negro Consumption, Rheumatism &c, and who wish to dispose of them on reasonable terms will address J. King, No. 29 Campst St., New Orleans.¹⁸

If Lincoln did not already understand the awful import of this last advertisement, his father-in-law, familiar with conditions in the Deep South, was able to advise him fully. Many plantations in Louisiana and the other Gulf States were operated entirely by hired overseers whose salaries were regulated by the net cash profits of each crop year. The owners of these vast estates seldom visited them more than once or twice a year and took no part whatever in the management of their slaves. Greed, unrestrained by the humanitarian impulses that usually came from direct contact between the bondman and his master, had developed a ghastly practice more or less prevalent in those sections. Old, broken-down Negroes, suffering from hopelessly chronic diseases, were purchased for a few dollars apiece in Kentucky and other border states, shipped south, and furiously worked under the lash until they literally fell in their tracks and died in the muddy ditches of the rice fields.¹⁹

A South Carolina periodical carried the following item:

OVERSEERS READ THIS!

It will be remembered by the overseers of Edgefield, that Col. M. Frazer has offered a fine English lever watch as a reward to the overseer (working not less than 10 slaves) who will report the best managed plantation, largest crop per head of cotton, corn, wheat, and pork for the present season. Col. Frazer has just returned from the North and laid before us this elegant prize. Remember then, that the prize is now fairly upon the stake and that the longest pole knocks down the persimmon. Whip! Whip! Hurrah!!!²⁰

Lincoln, however, did not need to depend on what he read or heard in Lexington about the iniquity of slavery, for the evidences of it were all about him. The slave jail of W. A. Pullum, an extensive Negro dealer, stood in plain view of

"Grandma" Parker's home and only a few steps from her side porch. The front of the establishment was a two-story brick house just around the corner on Broadway. The trader and his family lived upstairs. The downstairs consisted of a large double room furnished with tables and chairs, with a liquor bar in one end and a fireplace in the other, where dealers, drivers, and others connected with the slave traffic congregated, and where Negroes in cold weather were exhibited to prospective buyers. In the yard at the rear of the building were rows of slave pens, eight feet square, seven feet high, constructed on damp brick floors covered with vermin-infested straw, with tiny barred windows near the roof and heavy, rivet-studded, iron-grated doors.

From the terrace of the Parker lawn Abraham Lincoln could look down over the spiked palings that separated the Pullum property from Mechanics Alley into the yard of the slave jail, and from the "private" whipping post that stood in one corner he could hear those cries which another visitor to Lexington years before had characterized as "the knell of Kentucky liberty."

Megowan's jail stood at the corner of Short and Mulberry (now Limestone) streets, one block east of the courthouse—a grim-looking structure with high massive walls, where most of the runaways, Negroes awaiting execution, and those about to be sold south for incorrigibility were confined.

It is impossible, of course, to determine the number of slaves that were sold at auction during these weeks of Lincoln's visit in Lexington. Not many days, however, went by without the sale of one or more Negroes at public outcry on Cheapside or at the block in the courthouse yard, and Saturdays and court days were the occasions when most of these auctions took place. The Bluegrass metropolis would soon become the largest slave market in Kentucky.

Court day was a peculiar and a picturesque institution in central Kentucky. On the second Monday in each month the

justices of the peace, who constituted the county court, assembled at the historic old edifice on the public square in Lexington to transact the people's business. But the crowd that thronged Cheapside on such days from dawn to dusk had little or no interest in the deliberations of the squires around the long pine table in the courthouse. By the custom of years this was a time when the rural folk of Fayette and neighboring counties took a day off and came to town to shop and trade, drink with their friends, swap horses, see the sights, and enjoy themselves, each according to his own fancy.

Cheapside had been the public meeting place since the town of Lexington was born, and here on court day junk dealers, planters, traders, and those nondescripts called "poor whites" assembled at an early hour with livestock of every kind and description and sundry other articles for barter and sale. By noontime one unfamiliar with this institution, standing at the second-story window of the courthouse, looked down upon a strange and novel spectacle: a bit of grotesque yet colorful pageantry which only the gregarious nature of the Kentuckian could have produced.

Old, buck-kneed plug horses, with now and then a thoroughbred or blooded saddle nag; shaggy mules with cockleburrs in their tails; cows and calves; sway-backed brood mares with wobbly, spindle-legged colts at their heels; Negro men, women, half-grown boys and girls, even children: all were being offered for sale under the hammers of shrill-voiced auctioneers. Little groups of men squatted on the low wooden benches near the iron fence that ran along the edge of the courthouse yard, puffing their pipes, chewing tobacco, whittling, and swapping stories. Others gathered around the nostrum vender, gaudily dressed in a stovepipe hat, brocaded waistcoat, with bushy hair falling over the greasy velvet collar of his knee-length dress coat, who glibly proclaimed the marvelous virtues of "Dr. Sherman's All-Healing Balsam," "Old Sachem Bitters," or "Hart's Vegetable Compound for Epileptic Fits." Farmer boys in their best breeches of homespun jean stood in creaking

"Sunday" brogan shoes, listening to the blind, toothless mendicant who sat on a curbstone with a tin cup about his neck and sang plaintive ballads in a cracked, quavering voice to the halting accompaniment of his squeaky fiddle.

Cheapside on court day was democracy in the raw. Men who moved in vastly different social orbits on other days met here on terms of perfect equality. Before the polished bars of the tippling houses he whom the Negroes called "pore white trash" sipped his apple brandy toddy shoulder to shoulder with the julep-drinking country gentleman in his broad-brimmed hat and whipcord riding breeches tucked into soft leather boots, and the town dandy clad in broadcloth pantaloons, swallow-tailed coat, silk ruffled shirt, and white beaver hat. Here the talk was free and easy. The weather, crops, politics, and horses were discussed, and every man had his say.²¹

Such was the scene that Lincoln must have witnessed on Monday, November 15, 1847. On that day five slaves were sold to satisfy a judgment that Robert S. Todd and one of his partners had obtained against their owner, John F. Leavy, which directed "that the negroes, viz: Nathaniel, Ned, Dick, Emily, & Nelly, alias Molley be sold at the court-house door in Lexington to the highest bidder."²²

During the entire period of Lincoln's stay in Lexington, Henry Clay was at "Ashland," and Mary took her husband to see him. Though his son, Henry Clay, Jr., had fallen on a Mexican battlefield, the old man bore his sorrow with calm fortitude. Even in the midst of his bereavement the Sage of Ashland pondered the grave questions that then vexed his country.

On November 3 the *Observer* announced that on Saturday, November 13, at the courthouse Clay would deliver a speech on the conduct of the Mexican War. In the Singleton Will case a few days before, Lincoln was very likely present during Clay's masterly argument which consumed more than three

hours, and now he had an opportunity to hear the famous orator in his favorite role from the hustings.

By Friday evening the taverns were packed with visitors, many of whom, like Morton McMichael, editor of the *Philadelphia North American*, had come hundreds of miles to hear Clay's address. Next morning the crowd was so large, in spite of the rain, that the meeting was adjourned to a large brick structure on Water Street, known as the Lower Market-House, where a temporary platform had been erected in one end of the building. Here, with Judge George Robertson, the chairman, seated on one side, and Robert S. Todd, vice-chairman, on the other, before an audience that contained representatives from a majority of the states of the Union, Henry Clay delivered one of the ablest and most statesmanlike addresses of his long career.

No ordinary occasion would have drawn me from the retirement in which I live [began Mr. Clay]; but whilst a single pulsation of the human heart remains, it should, if necessary, be dedicated to the service of one's country. . . . I have come here with no purpose to attempt to make a fine speech, or any ambitious oratorical display. I have brought with me no rhetorical bouquets to throw into this assembly. In the circle of the year, autumn has come, and the season of flowers has passed away. In the progress of years, my springtime has gone by, and I too am in the autumn of life, and feel the frost of age. My desire and aim are to address you, earnestly, calmly, seriously and plainly, upon the grave and momentous subjects which have brought us together. And I am most solicitous that not a solitary word may fall from me, offensive to any party or person in the whole extent of the Union.

The speaker argued at length that the Mexican War would have been averted had not General Taylor been ordered "to transport his cannon, and to plant them in a warlike attitude, opposite Matamoras, on the east bank of the Rio Bravo within the very disputed district" then the subject of diplomatic negotiation. "This is no war of defense," exclaimed Clay, "but

one unnecessary and of offensive aggression. It is Mexico that is defending her firesides, her castles and her altars, not we. But," said he, "without indulging in an unnecessary retrospect and useless reproaches in the past, all hearts and heads should unite in the patriotic effort to bring it to a satisfactory close. . . . This is the important subject upon which I desire to consult and to commune with you."

The objects and purposes of the war had never been defined, Clay said, by either Congress or President Polk. No one knew what they were, nor when they might be achieved. "It is the duty of Congress, by some deliberate and authentic act," continued the speaker, "to declare for what objects the present war shall be longer prosecuted." What should they be? Should this war be waged for the purpose of conquering and annexing Mexico, "in all its boundless extent to the United States? Does any considerate man believe it possible that two such immense countries, with territories of nearly equal extent, with population so incongruous, so different in race, in language, in religion and in laws, could be blended together in one harmonious mass and happily governed by one common authority?"

Should any territory be wrested from Mexico by way of indemnity for the purpose of introducing slavery into it?

My opinions on the subject of slavery are well known [said Clay]. They have the merit, if it be one, of consistency, uniformity and long duration. I have ever regarded slavery as a great evil, a wrong, for the present I fear, an irremedial wrong to its unfortunate victims. I should rejoice if not a single slave breathed the air or was within the limits of our country. Among the resolutions which it is my intent to present for your consideration at the conclusion of the address one proposes in your behalf and mine, to disavow, in the most positive manner, any desire on our part to acquire any foreign territory whatever for the purpose of introducing slavery into it.

The speaker referred at length to the American Colonization Society—its aims, its hopes, its failures—and the gloomy prospects for the end of slavery for generations yet to come.

"But I forbear," he said in closing; "I will no longer trespass upon your patience or further tax my own voice, impaired by a speech of more than three hours' duration which professional duty required me to make only a few days ago."

At the conclusion of the two-and-a-half-hour speech a series of resolutions was "almost unanimously" adopted by which the meeting went on record "that the immediate occasion of hostilities" was caused by the removal of General Taylor's army into "territory then under the jurisdiction of Mexico and inhabited by its citizens," and that "we do positively and emphatically disclaim and disavow any wish or desire on our part, to acquire any foreign territory whatever, for the purpose of propagating slavery or introducing slaves from the United States into such foreign territory."

Gallant Harry had again captivated his audience. "It seems that his friends never get tired of listening to his rich voice and his uncommon good sense," said the *Observer*. "The speaker himself scarcely seemed to be an old man."²³

The meeting at the Lower Market-House was more than an ordinary event in Lincoln's life. Though thirty-eight years of age and about to enter the national forum himself, he had heard only one other speaker of nationwide renown.²⁴ Clay's speech wholly lacked oratorical frills, but the charm of its delivery and its "uncommon good sense" impressed Lincoln deeply as he resumed his browsing in the Todd library.

Poking about in these well-stocked bookcases was one of his chief diversions. Absorbed in some interesting volume, he would sit for hours in the rear parlor or in the passageway upstairs where some of the books were kept, wholly oblivious of the romping and chatter of Bob and Emilie and the other little Todds.²⁵ The Todd books were a varied assortment. Among the several hundred items there was a copy of *The Messages of the Presidents*, Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Prentice's *Life of Henry Clay* in two volumes, a set of Shakespeare in eight volumes, the *Life of Oliver Cromwell*, the poems of Robert Burns, the *Life of*

Napoleon, Byron's *Don Juan*, Pope in five volumes, and *Niles' Register* in fifty-eight volumes.²⁶

But the book that Lincoln read more than all the rest was a volume of verse entitled: *Elegant Extracts, or Useful and Entertaining Passages from the Best English Authors and Translations*, and he marked or underscored heavily with a lead pencil such of these poems, or excerpts from them, as particularly struck his fancy.²⁷ He committed Bryant's *Thanatopsis* to memory and repeated it to the members of the Todd household. While reading the volume he checked the familiar quotation from Pope:

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;
The proper study of Mankind is man.

He made marginal notations opposite a passage from Blair's *The Grave*:

The last end
Of the good man is peace. How calm his exit.
Night dews fall not more gently to the ground,
Nor weary, worn-out winds expire so soft.

and Cowper's lines from *Charity* dealing with slavery:

But Ah! What wish can prosper, or what prayer
For merchants rich in cargoes of despair,
Who drive a loathsome traffic, gauge and span,
And buy the muscles and the bones of man?
The tender ties of father, husband, friend,
All bonds of nature in that moment end;
And each endures, while yet he draws his breath,
A stroke as fatal as the scythe of death.

He was particularly impressed with Cowper's poem, *On Receipt of My Mother's Picture*, and drew a hand with the index finger pointing to the stanza:

Oh that those lips had language! Life has pass'd
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,
The same that oft in childhood solaced me.

Lincoln's approval of certain portions of a poem entitled, *Love of Fame*:

A dearth of words, a woman need not fear;
But 'tis a task indeed to learn to *hear*.

Doubly like Echo sound is her delight,
And the last word is her eternal right.
Is't not enough plagues, wars and famines rise
To lash our crimes, but must our wives be wise?

probably subjected him to rather sharp badinage from Mary, but if so, she may have been somewhat mollified by another passage that he had marked which, although enumerating certain feminine frailties, has an assuaging sentiment in the concluding lines:

O, Woman! in our hours of ease
Uncertain, coy and hard to please,
And variable as the shade
By the light quivering aspen made;
When pain and anguish wring the brow
A ministering angel thou!

Lincoln also spent much time about the courthouse and the public square, just as he did back home. The presiding judge, Richard A. Buckner, intimate friend of Robert S. Todd, and many of the lawyers had their offices in the low brick buildings on the east side of the courthouse known as "Jordan's Row," and here Lincoln loafed, swapped stories, and talked politics with Judge Buckner, Judge Robertson, George B. Kinkead, his wife's cousins, John C. Breckinridge and Charles D. Carr, John B. Huston, and other members of the local bar.

Judge Kinkead later remembered two stories which Lincoln had told about himself. In the fall of 1841 Lincoln had visited Joshua F. Speed at "Farmington," the old Speed plantation near Louisville. Almost every day he walked into town and sat in the office of Joshua's older brother James, reading his books and talking over his studies and aspirations with the courtly, scholarly lawyer.

Late one evening, as Lincoln trudged back to "Farming-ton," three thugs sprang from a dark alley, and one of them flourished a long, keen pruning knife that glittered ominously in the moonlight. Making passes extremely close to Lincoln's long, bony neck, the highwayman queried, "Can you lend me \$5.00 on that?" Lincoln hastily reached for the only bill he had in his pocket: "There's \$10.00 neighbor," he replied; "now put up your scythe."²⁸

Joshua Speed was then ardently courting comely, black-eyed Fanny Henning, who lived with a devoted uncle, John Williamson, on a nearby farm. Speed was always inventing excuses to make apparently casual calls at Uncle John's residence, and one day, after having been there once, he took Lincoln on the cars to Lexington—his first visit here—in order to have an excuse to drop in again that evening on his way back home.

Speed complained bitterly that he and Fanny could never find themselves outside the presence of Uncle John—a violent Whig who insisted on talking politics by the hour with Speed, who was also affiliated with that party. Finally Lincoln thought up a scheme which might give Speed his chance with Fanny. That night, when they reached the Williamson home, Lincoln, then having completed his fourth term as a Whig member of the Illinois legislature, pretended to be a Democrat and occupied the old gentleman so completely in argument that the two young people were permitted to enjoy a rare, uninterrupted evening which went far toward their early engagement.²⁹

Public attention was now focused once more upon the adventurous editor of *The True American*. At the first call to arms against Mexico, Cassius M. Clay had promptly dropped his feud with the slave power and shouldered a musket as a private in that organization of glorious traditions, the Lexington Light Infantry, whose captain he had been in former days. Before leaving for the front, however, the company had assembled in the courthouse yard, and on the spot where he had recently been denounced as a "damned nigger agitator"

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**SOUND & HEALTHY
Negroes
OF BOTH SEXES.**

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For the purpose of dealing in Slaves, and will trans-
act business at the house lately occupied by Jos. H.
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And will pay the highest prices offered in the mar-
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he was unanimously chosen to lead the Old Infantry into action.

On January 23, 1846, Captain Clay and a handful of men had been surrounded and captured at Encarnacion by three thousand Mexican cavalry. Following imprisonment of many months the survivors were exchanged, and most of them, except Captain Clay and a few others, had already returned home. Sentiment toward the captain of the Old Infantry, as Lincoln found, along Jordan's Row and in the community generally had undergone a change since that day in August two years before, when the mob had raided the office of *The True American*.

A week before Lincoln's arrival in Lexington a card had been published in the *Observer*, signed by five of Captain Clay's men, in which they praised the courage and self-sacrifice of their leader. They related how after their capture, when an order had been given for the massacre of the American soldiers, Clay had asked that the privates be spared. With the cocked pistol of a Mexican major at his breast the captain had looked him fearlessly in the eye and exclaimed: "Kill me—kill the officers, but spare the men!" Then on the weary journey to Mexico City, as the ragged, barefoot soldiers were marching forty miles a day over the rough mountain trails, Clay had made his exhausted men take turns riding his own mule, while he trudged grimly behind on foot. During the long confinement he had tenderly nursed the sick and had sold his mule, buffalo rug, watch, and all his wearing apparel except the tattered uniform on his back to buy medicine and supplies for his soldiers.³⁰

And now, as Lincoln's vacation came to an end, elaborate preparations were being made to receive the returning hero, then on his way back home. His old friend, Robert S. Todd, had been selected to give the address of welcome,³¹ and the impulsive, warmhearted Colonel Jesse Bayles, forgetting that he had been one of the committee of sixty who stormed the office of *The True American*, was to be the grand marshal at this event of ceremony and felicitation.

November days were drawing to a close. Senator Crittenden and other members of the Kentucky delegation were starting to Washington for the opening of Congress. On Thanksgiving Day, Congressman Lincoln heard the great preacher-orator, Dr. Robert J. Breckinridge, whose philippics on slavery had so often appeared in the columns of the *Observer*. Sitting there in the quaint, dim old Presbyterian Church, Lincoln did not know how much he would come to rely on this plumed Crusader of the Cloth in those anxious days of the future when the nation's life hung in the balance. Then, on the afternoon of that day, the Lincolns said good-by to Lexington and with their two little boys boarded the stage for Maysville, where they would take a steamboat up the Ohio on their journey to Washington.

Widow Sprigg and Buena Vista

CONGRESSMAN Lincoln and his family arrived in Washington late Thursday evening, December 2, and obtained temporary lodging at Brown's Hotel.¹ In a few days they moved over to the boardinghouse of Mrs. Ann G. Sprigg in Carroll Row on Capitol Hill. On Monday, December 6, the Thirtieth Congress convened with the "lone Whig" from Illinois in his seat.

By the time the House had organized, the new congressman was in correspondence with his law partner back in Springfield, closing a letter to Herndon with the jocular remark: "As you are all so anxious for me to distinguish myself, I have concluded to do so, before long."² Lincoln had never accepted the repeated declaration of President Polk that the first blood of the war with Mexico had been shed on American soil, and Clay's address at Lexington had convinced him that such was not the case. This speech had stimulated his interest in the political aspect of the war, and he lost no time in making inquiry as to the exact manner of its origin. The personal allusion in his letter to Herndon evidently referred to the now

famous "spot" resolutions which he introduced in the House on December 22 and to his speech in support of them several weeks later.

In presenting these resolutions the Illinois representative called upon the President to name the "spot" where American blood was first shed and to say whether this spot was not within the territory wrested from Spain by the revolutionary government of Mexico. Certain portions of the speech, while couched in Lincoln's own lucid and somewhat droll phraseology, strongly resembled the "13th of November" address of Henry Clay.³

Early in the new year the Sage of Ashland arrived in Washington to argue an important case before the Supreme Court. On the evening of January 18, before an immense crowd that packed the hall of the House of Representatives, he presided over the annual meeting of the American Colonization Society, and Lincoln had a rare opportunity to hear an impressive extemporaneous speech, where Clay always appeared to such excellent advantage.

The speaker recalled that he had been one of a small group of men who founded the society more than thirty years before. He spoke of the high ideals of the organization, of its achievements in the face of almost unsurmountable difficulties, and of the grave responsibilities of the future. He related, in the midst of hearty applause, how a gentleman who recently died in Alabama, a stranger to him, had left him twenty-five or thirty slaves under his will, and how he had induced twenty-three of them to go to Liberia, whither they had just embarked from New Orleans. With deep emotion which he could not wholly restrain, Clay said in closing that this was the last occasion in "all human probability" that he would ever have to address the society.⁴ Then on Lincoln's birthday, Saturday, February 12, Clay argued the case of *William Houston et al. v. the City Bank of New Orleans* in the Supreme Courtroom that was "crowded almost to suffocation."

Mrs. Lincoln and the children remained in Washington through the winter, but returned to Lexington in the early

spring of 1848. At their Grandfather Todd's comfortable residence on West Main and out at "Buena Vista" on the Leestown Pike, Robert and little Eddie, with small pickaninnies to do their bidding, found much in contrast to the cramped quarters at Widow Sprigg's boardinghouse. The Todd summer home was a tall, rambling frame house surrounded by large locust trees, situated on a beautiful knoll a quarter of a mile from the highway. It then had a double portico in front and a long porch on the side that connected two stone slave cabins with the main portion of the dwelling. A tiny brook meandered from a stone springhouse through the rolling woodland at the foot of the knoll, and from the porticoes the view was magnificent.

The "lone Whig" and his wife were regular correspondents, and one of the letters that he wrote her ran as follows:

Washington, April 16, 1848.

Dear Mary:

In this troublesome world, we are never quite satisfied. When you were here, I thought you hindered me some in attending to business; but now, having nothing but business—no variety—it has grown exceedingly tasteless to me. I hate to sit down and direct documents, and I hate to stay in this old room by myself. You know I told you in last Sunday's letter, I was going to make a little speech during the week; but the week has passed away without my getting a chance to do so; and now my interest in the subject has passed away too. Your second and third letters have been received since I wrote before. Dear Eddy thinks father is "*gone tapila*." Has any further discovery been made as to the breaking into your grandmother's house? If I were she, I would not remain there alone. You mention that your uncle John Parker is likely to be at Lexington. Don't forget to present him my very kindest regards.

I went yesterday to hunt the little plaid stockings as you wished; but found that McKnight has quit business, and Allen had not a single pair of the description you give, and only one plaid pair of any sort that I thought would fit "Eddy's dear little feet." I have a notion to make another trial to-morrow morning. If I could get them, I have an excellent chance of sending them. Mr. Warrick Tunstall, of St. Louis is here. He is to leave early this week, and

to go by Lexington. He says he knows you, and will call to see you; and he voluntarily asked, if I had not some package to send to you.

I wish you would enjoy yourself in every possible way; but is there no danger of wounding the feelings of your good father, by being so openly intimate with the Wickliffe family?

Mrs. Broome has not removed yet; but she thinks of doing so to-morrow. All the house—or rather, all with whom you were on decided good terms—send their love to you. The others say nothing.

Very soon after you went away, I got what I think a very pretty set of shirt-bosom studs—modest little ones, jet, set in gold, only costing 50 cents a piece, or 1.50 for the whole.

Suppose you do not prefix the “Hon” to the address on your letters to me any more. I like the letters very much, but I would rather they should not have that upon them. It is not necessary, as I suppose you have thought, to have them to come free.

And you are entirely free from head-ache? That is good—good—considering it is the first spring you have been free from it since we were acquainted. I am afraid you will get so well, and fat, and young, as to be wanting to marry again. Tell Louisa I want her to watch you a little for me. Get weighed, and write me how much you weigh.

I did not get rid of the impression of that foolish dream about dear Bobby, till I got your letter written the same day. What did he and Eddy think of the little letters father sent them? Dont let the blessed fellows forget father.

A day or two ago Mr. Strong, here in Congress, said to me that Matilda would visit here within two or three weeks. Suppose you write her a letter, and enclose it in one of mine; and if she comes I will deliver it to her, and if she does not, I will send it to her.

Most affectionately

A. Lincoln⁵

And on a warm May evening, by her window that opened into the garden filled with lilacs and honeysuckle, Mary scribbled a long, newsy letter to her husband:

Lexington, May —, 48.

My Dear Husband—

You will think indeed, that *old age* has set *its seal*, upon my humble self, that in few or none of my letters, I can remember the

day of the month. I must confess it is one of my peculiarities; I feel wearied & tired enough to know that this is *Saturday night*, our *babies* are asleep, and as Aunt Maria B. is coming in for me tomorrow morning, I think the chances will be rather dull that I should answer your last letter to-morrow. I have just received a letter from Frances W., it related in an *especial* manner to *the box*, I had desired her to send, she thinks with you (as good persons generally agree) that it would cost more than it would come to, and it might be lost on the road. I rather expect she has examined the specified articles, and thinks, as *Levi* says, they are *hard bargains*. But it takes so many changes to do children, particularly in summer, that I thought it might save me a few stitches. I think I will write her a few lines this evening, directing her not to send them. She says Willie is just recovering from another spell of sickness, Mary or none of them were well. Springfield, she reports as dull as usual—Uncle S. was to leave there on yesterday for Ky.

Our little Eddy, has recovered from his little spell of sickness—Dear boy, I must tell you a little story about him. Bobby in his wanderings to day, came across in a yard, a little kitten, *your hobby*,⁶ he says he asked a man for it; he brought it triumphantly to the house; so soon as Eddy spied it, his *tenderness*, broke forth, he made them bring it *water*, fed it with bread himself, with his *own dear hands*, he was a delighted little creature over it; in the midst of his happiness Ma came in, she, you must know dislikes the whole cat race. I thought in a very unfeeling manner, she ordered the servant near, to throw it out, which of *course* was done,—Ed—screaming & protesting loudly against the proceedings, *she* never appeared to mind his screams, which were long & loud, I assure you. Tis unusual for her *now a days*, to do any thing quite so striking, she is very obliging & accommodating, but if she thought any of us, were on her hands again, I believe she would be *worse* than ever. In the next moment she appeared in a good humor, I know she did not intend to offend me. By the way, she has just sent me up a glass of ice cream, for which this warm evening, I am duly grateful. The country is so delightful I am going to spend two or three weeks out there, it will doubtless benefit the children. Grandma has received a letter from Uncle James Parker of Miss. saying he & his family would be up by the twenty fifth of June, would remain here some little time & go on to Philadelphia to take their oldest daughter there to school. I believe it would be a good chance for me to

pack up & accompany them. You know I am so fond of *sight-seeing*, & I did not get to New York or Boston, or travel the lake route. But perhaps, dear husband, like the *irresistible Col. Mc.* cannot do without his wife next winter, and must needs take her with him again—I expect you would cry aloud against it. How much, I wish instead of writing, we were together this evening, I feel very sad away from you. Ma & myself rode out to Mr. Bell's splendid place this afternoon, to return a call, the house and grounds are magnificent. Frances W. would *have died* over their rare exotics. It is growing late, these summer eves are short, I expect my long *scrawls*, for truly such they are, weary you greatly—if you come on, in July or August I will take you to the springs. *Patty Webb's* school in S— closes the first of July, I expect *Mr. Webb*, will come on for her, I must go down about that time & carry on quite a flirtation, you know *we* always had a *penchant* that way. I must bid you good night. Do not fear the children, have forgotten you, I was only jesting—even E—eyes brighten at the mention of your name. My love to all—Truly yours

M. L.⁷

Lincoln did not forget to provide his family with funds, even though under the circumstances they were at practically no expense.

Washington, May 24, 1848.

My dear wife:

Enclosed is the draft as I promised you in my letter of Sunday. It is drawn in favor of your father, and I doubt not, he will give you the money for it at once. I write this letter in the post-office, surrounded by men and noise, which, together with the fact that there is nothing new, makes me write so short a letter.

Affectionately

A. Lincoln⁸

Mary's letters from Lexington were full of local happenings, interesting to the lonely man at the Widow Sprigg's. Thieves had broken into "Grandma" Parker's residence and had stolen a gold watch and a quantity of monogrammed silverware. Mrs. Parker had offered a reward of a hundred dollars for their detection.⁹ "Has any further discovery been made as to the

breaking into your grand-mother's house?" wrote Lincoln. "If I were she, I would not remain there alone."¹⁰ Cassius M. Clay on his return from Mexico had renewed warfare on his old enemies by suing the leaders of the committee of sixty for damages to his printing press and, upon a change of venue to Jessamine County, was awarded judgment for \$2,500.¹¹ Henry Clay, having been defeated in the Philadelphia convention by General Taylor, was being urged to stand for election to the Senate, and John J. Crittenden had resigned his seat in that body to become the Whig candidate for governor of Kentucky.

Another letter from Lincoln to his wife during these months has been preserved:

Washington, July 2, 1848.

My dear wife:

Your letter of last sunday came last night. On that day (sunday) I wrote the principal part of a letter to you, but did not finish it, or send it till tuesday, when I had provided a draft for \$100 which I sent in it. It is now probable that on that day (tuesday) you started to Shelbyville; so that when the money reaches Lexington, you will not be there. Before leaving, did you make any provision about letters that might come to Lexington for you? Write me whether you got the draft, if you shall not have already done so, when this reaches you. Give my kindest regards to your uncle John, and all the family. Thinking of them reminds me that I saw your acquaintance, Newton, of Arkansas, at the Philadelphia Convention. We had but a single interview, and that was so brief, and in so great a multitude of strange faces, that I am quite sure I should not recognize him, if I were to meet him again. He was a sort of Trinity, three in one, having the right, in his own person, to cast the three votes of Arkansas. Two or three days ago I sent your uncle John, and a few of our other friends each a copy of the speech I mentioned in my last letter; but I did not send any to you, thinking you would be on the road here, before it would reach you. I send you one now. Last wednesday, P. H. Hood & Co., dunned me for a little bill of \$5.38 cents, and Walter Harper & Co, another for \$8.50 cents, for goods which they say you bought. I hesitated to pay them, because my recollection is that you told me when you

went away, there was nothing left unpaid. Mention in your next letter whether they are right.

At some length the letter ran along in chatty fashion. The Richardsons had a new baby. Interest in the Saturday night concerts on the Capitol grounds was dwindling. Two girls that he and Mrs. Lincoln had seen at the exhibition of the Ethiopian Serenaders were still in Washington. . . . And then closes:

I have had no letter from home, since I wrote you before, except short business letters, which have no interest for you.

By the way, you do not intend to do without a girl, because the one you had has left you? Get another as soon as you can to take charge of the dear codgers. Father expected to see you all sooner; but let it pass; stay as long as you please, and come when you please. Kiss and love the dear rascals.

Affectionately

A. Lincoln¹²

Lincoln's course in the Mexican War was unpopular with many of his constituents back home. Herndon gloomily reported extensive defections in the Whig ranks and severely criticized the party's attitude on slavery. Lincoln suggested that he "gather up all the shrewd wild boys about town" and organize a "Rough & Ready" club for General Taylor. "Let every one play the part he can play best," he advised; "some speak, some sing, and all hollow."¹³

But Herndon wrote back complaining of certain "old fossils in the party who are constantly keeping the young men down," to which his partner on July 10, 1848, responded in a long anxious letter filled with homely philosophy. Herndon's bitterness was "exceedingly painful" to him. "The way for a young man to rise, is to improve himself every way he can, never suspecting that any body wishes to hinder him." Lincoln predicted that by taking his advice the junior partner would achieve a position among the people "far above any I have ever been able to reach, in their admiration."¹⁴

Next day Lincoln received a bright, gossipy letter from

Herndon in which there was mention of "kissing a pretty girl." Much relieved that his young associate had recovered his spirits, the "lone Whig" from his desk in the House scribbled a hasty reply in similar vein:

Washington, July 11, 1848.

Dear William:

Yours of the 3rd. is this moment received; and I hardly need say, it gives unalloyed pleasure. I now almost regret writing the serious, long faced letter, I wrote yesterday; but let the past as nothing be. Go it while you're young!

I write this in the confusion of the H.R., and with several other things to attend to. I will send you about eight different speeches this evening; and as to kissing a pretty girl, [I] know one very pretty one, but I guess she wont let me kiss her.¹⁵

Yours forever

A. Lincoln¹⁶

The long table in Widow Sprigg's dining room was always crowded. Many of the boarders were members of Congress, and all of these were Whigs. Even then the issue of slavery had begun to divide the party. The Wilmot Proviso was a topic of frequent conversation—sometimes, argued hotly, with Congressmen John Dickey of Pennsylvania and Patrick W. Tompkins of Mississippi the chief participants.

Dr. Samuel C. Busey, one of the boarders, remembered that Lincoln "always seemed anxious to avoid giving offense to anybody." When the conversation became heated or even "unpleasantly contentious" he would step in and guide it skillfully into other channels or interrupt with an anecdote that produced such hearty and general laughter that the parties involved would "either separate in good humor or continue conversation free from discord."

The amiable disposition of the Illinois congressman made him exceedingly popular with everybody. He was fond of bowling and there was an alley near the boardinghouse. By no means adept at the game, he played with great zest and

spirit, accepting success or defeat with "like good nature and humor." Whenever it was known that Lincoln was going to play, the alley was crowded with persons eager to hear his inexhaustible fund of stories and ludicrous remarks.¹⁷

One morning Congressman Lincoln opened his *Illinois Journal*, and the following item met his eye:

Denton Offutt, The Horse Tamer—"This singular personage," says a late Nashville paper, "has been in this city for several days, and of his wonderful skill in the management and taming of horses hundreds can testify.

"A few experiments that I saw with my own eyes would satisfy the most incredulous. A few days since, in front of the Union Hall, a strange and wild horse, the property of Dr. Hall, of Gallatin, was presented to him for a trial of his skill, and in less than ten minutes, he made him gentle as a dog, the horse following him wherever he went. The same horse would not permit an umbrella to be hoisted over him, but in the hands of Offutt, he soon became as familiar to an umbrella as to a bridle, and would stand perfectly still, while the umbrella was not only hoisted, but rattled about his head, and [he was] struck on the face with it.

"Several other cases, equally as remarkable, I could state, but the above will suffice. The great beauty of the art is its simplicity, and the short time it takes him to communicate it to others."¹⁸

It had been sixteen years since Lincoln had heard from the little trader from Hickman Creek—since he had said good-by to him that afternoon as he left New Salem, defeated and discouraged.

Offutt, empty of pocket, had returned to his native Bluegrass region. Brother Otho owned a fine farm in the fertile Elkhorn Valley of Fayette County. Brother Sam, a big hemp buyer, lived on his plantation of 220 acres in the adjoining county of Bourbon. For the next eight years Denton and his nephew Joe, son of brother Tilghman, handled livestock for Otho and Sam, taking large droves of mules for the latter down

to Natchez. Saddle horses were Otho's specialty, and Denton and Joe trained them, got them ready for the eastern market, and sold them in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. Frequently they took mules, cattle, and hogs to New Orleans for Tilghman, but these trips now were made in comparative luxury, the river freighter having displaced the flatboat.

In the spring of 1842 the hemp market crashed, leaving Sam Offutt irretrievably ruined. He had borrowed large sums from Otho, who was also surety on many of his other debts. Then on August 16, 1842, Otho died suddenly. Parker Otwell was appointed administrator, and he and Denton, who was still a bachelor living with Otho, proceeded under the orders of the court to wind up the decedent's estate.¹⁹

A few months later Sam's creditors closed in upon him, contending that he was "insolvent" and "was about to dispose of his personal property." In support of these allegations Asa Barnett testified that Sam "kept his negroes out of sight, he got them to stay in a hole under the house, and run about at night for exercise" from April to August, when "he started them off to Missouri privately after night, saying if he did not get them off his creditors would get them." Then, having removed his Negroes and much of his other personalty out of the state, Sam "castrated a stallion" that was mortgaged to Edmund D. Jones and "rode him off to the state of Missouri."²⁰

The death of Otho and the financial collapse of Sam left Denton free to embark upon a calling for which he seemed eminently qualified by nature and which eventually brought him the public acclaim, if not the fortune, he had always so wistfully craved. Since early manhood on the farm Denton Offutt's personality had instinctively won the trust and confidence of all dumb animals. The wildest, meanest stallion, the most fractious mare, the most stubborn mule, after Denton had handled them a little while, would willingly do his bidding.

So Denton Offutt had become a professional horse tamer, and with local reputation already established, his fame quickly

spread, particularly southward. Aided by a ghost writer who corrected his grammar, syntax, and amazingly grotesque spelling, he published a small booklet of 120 pages introducing his "New and Complete System of Teaching the Horse."²¹

After a brief preface in which Offutt stated that he "was born on the waters of Hickman Creek, eight or nine miles south of Lexington, and raised to farming," the reader was informed that many methods existed all over the world for "gentling" horses. The Spaniards milked mare's milk into the hand, mixed it with salt, and let the horse "lick it from your hand." Others took from the horse's leg the "scurf or chestnut," pulverized it, put it into a quill, and "blew it into each nostril some three or four times." The Virginia manner was to "sicken the horse by giving him one or two pounds of fat bacon." Still another method was to mix the "oil of Rodium, oil of Annes, oil of Spike, three equal quantities, and let them smell it from a vial or from your hand." Wherever "the law of kindness is involved," said Offutt, "I believe the above methods useful. No further have I any confidence in them."

Offutt's technique was simple. Patience, kindness, caresses, soft words, and a quiet courage that must not falter never failed to soothe and subdue the most vicious instincts. "Put your arms around his neck and whisper the words in his ear"—whispering being most effective in the "gentling" process, because it was the best way to "keep his attention."

"By my system," said Offutt, "the wildest and most vicious horse may be made in a short time useful, but all cannot be made equally gentle." Whips or other means of punishment must never be used. "If the horse shows fight and attempts to fly at you, as the wildest are apt to do, shaking a blanket in his face will effectually frighten him from his purpose." Never show fear. Never be angry. Approach him gradually, talking to him softly and in "a constant tone." Rub his face "gently downward, not across or against the grain of the hair; as soon as he becomes reconciled to this (as you will perceive by his eye and countenance) rub his neck and back. . . . You must

rub him on both sides," reminded Offutt, "as he may be gentle on one side and not on the other."

As for artificial methods, all that Offutt ever did—and that only with a horse that had fasted from twelve to twenty-four hours—was to feed him, while patting, rubbing, and talking, bits of "sweated" cake made from "one pound of oatmeal, one quarter pound of honey, and one-half pound of laurence." The author concluded his instructions on horse training with the admonition, "Horse breeders! be kind and gentle to your foals, and you will seldom have vicious horses to tame."

As Lincoln observed from his newspaper, doubtless to his great satisfaction, popularity and success in an entirely different role from that envisioned in New Salem days had finally come to his old sponsor and was now being recorded in the public press. In fact, if he could have known it, Offutt was about this time only forty miles away, giving exhibitions of horse taming in Baltimore—ever the showman—dressed in a black suit with a broad, multicolored satin sash extending across his right shoulder to a large rosette of the same material on his left hip.²²

There was at least one outstanding event of the summer for little Eddie and Bob. On a sultry August day Howe's Great Circus and Collection of World Curiosities came to town, and at noon the gorgeous street parade with blaring music passed slowly down Main Street in front of the Todd residence. It was headed by an "Egyptian Dragon Chariot drawn by twelve trained Syrian camels," containing the "Full New York Brass Band," followed by Queen Mabb's "Fairy Chariot" with twelve diminutive Shetland ponies driven by the "celebrated Dwarf, Major Stevens," cavorting clowns, a troop of "Real Bedouin Arabs," eight Equestrian Ladies, wild beasts of the African jungles that glared ferociously through the iron bars of their gilded cages, and "many other wonderful and impressive objects collected from remote parts of the Globe."

Then on Sunday morning, August 5, Fayette County was thrown into the most intense excitement ever known in central Kentucky. Between dusk and daylight some seventy-five slaves had escaped from their masters, and armed and desperate, they were thought to be headed for the Ohio River. It was soon discovered that Patrick Doyle, a student of Centre College in the neighboring town of Danville, was ringleader of the insurrection, and the entire Bluegrass, with threats of summary vengeance, turned out to apprehend the fugitives. A mass meeting hurriedly assembled at the courthouse to provide means "for the detection and punishment of abolitionists and others in enticing slaves from their owners."

The example of the notorious Fairbank [said the *Observer*], who is now in our state prison, serving a fifteen years apprenticeship at hard labor, has not, it seems, had the effect of keeping our state clear of these detestable villains who, under the false pretext of philanthropy, and with unexampled audacity are perpetrating their foul practice in our midst. It is time that a more severe example should be made of these wretches, and every citizen should be on the alert to detect and bring them to punishment. That there are abolitionists in our midst—emissaries from this piratical crew—whose business it is to tamper with and run off our slaves, there is not the shadow of doubt.²³

With hundreds of possemen galloping over the Paris-Cynthiana turnpike, while others scoured the countryside, the capture of Doyle and his little band of runaway slaves was merely a matter of time. In a few days the fugitives were surrounded in the hemp fields north of the village of Cynthiana, and after a short, brisk encounter the survivors surrendered. Doyle, heavily ironed, was brought back to Lexington, and as Mary Lincoln's visit came to a close, he lay in solitary confinement in Megowan's jail, awaiting trial for the grave offense of "Inciting Slaves to Conspiracy, Insurrection and Rebellion."²⁴

Lexington's young pastor of the First Baptist Church, William M. Pratt, wrote in his diary: "There has been a great disturbance in the country on account of some 60 or 70 negroes

A NEW
AND COMPLETE SYSTEM
OF
TEACHING THE HORSE,

On Phrenological Principles:

ALSO,
A RULE FOR SELECTING THE BEST

ANIMALS,

AND MODE OF TEACHING ALL BEASTS YOUR WILL.

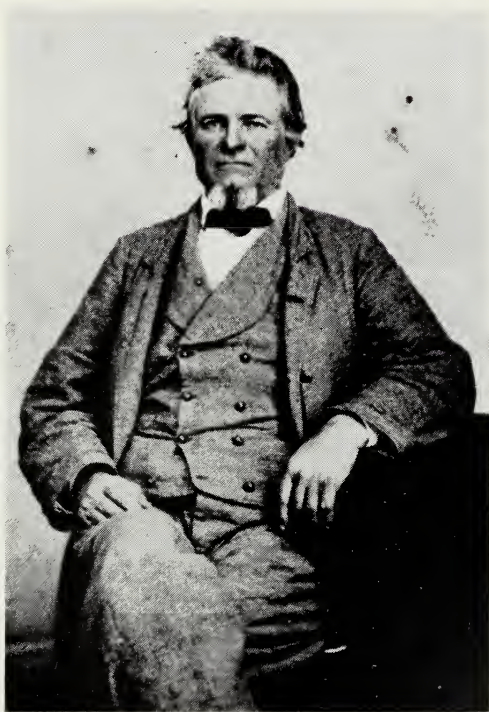
BREEDING OF HORSES,
And Cure of part of their Diseases.

BY DENTON OFFUTT.

CINCINNATI,
Appletons's Queen City Press.
1848.

TITLE PAGE OF DENTON OFFUTT'S BOOK.
Original owned by the author

JOE OFFUTT, PUPIL
AND "SPIT 'N' IMAGE"
OF HIS UNCLE DENTON
*Original photograph
owned by Mrs. Frank
J. Cheek*





"MR. BELL'S SPLENDID PLACE" IN LEXINGTON, WHERE FRIENDS OF THE LINCOLNS' LIVED



"BUENA VISTA," SUMMER HOME OF ROBERT S. TODD, WITH SLAVE CABINS, AS IT LOOKED BEFORE IT WAS RAZED

running off in a gang & hundreds have been in pursuit, nearly all taken. Some will be hung I fear, all the others will probably be sent down the river. They were a class of the finest negroes in the county. It is supposed they were decoyed by Abolitionists. . . . It has called for severe rules and regulations for the poor blacks.”²⁵

Congressman Lincoln had intended to join his wife and boys in Lexington upon the adjournment of Congress and to spend a few days with them at Crab Orchard Springs, but the exigencies of politics compelled a change of plans. General Taylor’s campaign for the Presidency was lagging in New England, and there were calls for reinforcements. So when Congress adjourned on August 14, Lincoln and General Leslie Combs of Lexington journeyed into Massachusetts to rally the apathetic Whigs about the standard of the Mexican War hero.

The approach of September days brought Mary’s stay in the Bluegrass to an end. It would be weeks now before she saw her husband, and then he would return direct to Springfield. Summer had swiftly passed, and Bob and Eddie were deeply tanned. These months had been happy ones for Mary and Mrs. Todd, for they at last had come to a thorough appreciation of each other. No shadow lay between them this time as Mary gathered up her little brood and started back to Illinois after an absence of nearly a year.

Meanwhile, Lincoln in a long linen duster was stumping New England for Zachary Taylor. He spoke at Worcester, New Bedford, Lowell, Dorchester, Chelsea, Dedham, Cambridge, Taunton. At Boston he shared the platform in Tremont Temple with William H. Seward.

Early in October, after a leisurely trip by way of Albany, Buffalo, and Niagara Falls, the Illinois congressman arrived home again to find the Whig defection in his district even worse than Herndon had described. He had not been a candidate for re-election, leaving the nomination to Judge Logan, whom the Democrats had decisively defeated at the August election.

Party leaders now blamed Lincoln's attitude on the Mexican War for the capture of this important Whig stronghold—the only one in the state except the Galena district.

For the first time in his life Lincoln felt that he had lost ground in public esteem—that his efforts as a servant of the people were unappreciated—and it cut him to the quick. Nevertheless, he plunged into the campaign in his district and spoke day and night in various counties.²⁶

In November, General Taylor was elected President of the United States, but Illinois went for Cass, and the incoming administration gave Lincoln no credit for the victory. Three weeks later, depressed and humiliated, the "lone Whig" returned to Washington to serve out the few remaining months of his term in Congress. Mrs. Lincoln was not with him, and such letters as he wrote to her or to their kinfolk at Lexington are no longer extant.

On February 20 Lincoln's father-in-law, Robert S. Todd, wrote him. His brother, David Todd of Columbia, Missouri, had a son-in-law, Thomas M. Campbell, who was "in dependent circumstances." He sought Lincoln's aid in obtaining for Campbell an appointment as a clerk in one of the government departments under the incoming administration.²⁷

The closing weeks of Lincoln's career as a congressman were uneventful. He took little or no part in the debates, though he voted repeatedly for the Wilmot Proviso against slavery in any territory acquired from Mexico. He read to the House an amendment to a bill, abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia, but it was never formally introduced.

Early Sunday morning, March 4, 1849, the Thirtieth Congress adjourned sine die, and Lincoln went sadly back to his dingy, cluttered law office and the faithful clientele that waited for him on the prairies of Illinois.

A House Divided

THE GIANT whistle on Bruen's Foundry at Lexington ushered in with hoarse blasts the first day of January, 1849, and gay, midnight watch parties at the Phoenix Hotel and in private homes greeted the New Year with popping corks, sparkling tumblers, songs, and merry jest.

Scarcely, however, had the shouts of welcome died away when the "smouldering volcano" of slavery belched again into flames which raged fiercely through spring and summer into late autumn, unchecked by pestilence and bloodshed, giving to Abraham Lincoln "his first real specific alarm about the institution of slavery."¹

After several weeks of sharp skirmishing the antislavery forces achieved what seemed to be a signal victory for the cause of emancipation. Early in February a reluctant legislature issued the call for a convention to assemble on October 1, 1849, to draft a new state constitution, for which delegates were to be chosen at the August election. For more than a decade the enemies of freedom had forestalled every effort to revise the organic law because they feared the adoption of provisions

detrimental to slavery. Now that a convention actually had been called, prospects for gradual emancipation seemed brighter than ever before in the history of the commonwealth.

The House of Representatives, however, did not intend that there should be any doubt in the public mind as to where it stood on the slavery issue. On February 3, by unanimous action which included the vote of Joshua Speed, it adopted an emphatic resolution: "That we, the representatives of the people of Kentucky, are opposed to abolition or emancipation of slavery in any form or shape whatever, except as now provided by the Constitution and laws of the state."²

Three weeks later a bill was introduced to repeal the Non-importation Act, and while the emancipationists, whose vigilance had been relaxed by the recent victory, stood aghast in the midst of their jubilation, the legislature quickly set aside the drastic provisions of the Negro Law which prohibited the bringing of slaves into Kentucky as merchandise.³

Then, as if to make the issue in the approaching campaign even more clear-cut, the proslavery element struck its groggy adversaries another swift and stunning blow. A bill entitled "An Act for the benefit of those who have imported slaves contrary to the law of 1833" was hastily prepared and rushed through the Assembly, which provided that all such offenders were "forever absolved from all the penalties and liabilities incurred by the purchase or importation of said slaves."⁴ Kentucky had defiantly returned to the open status of a slave-breeding state, and the initial advantage of the emancipationists in forcing the convention crumbled to ashes in their hands.

For many years every attack upon the Negro Law had been repulsed in a decisive manner, and now its repeal in an unguarded moment was a crushing defeat. But the emancipationists were inured to disappointment, and it was not long before they had reformed their shattered ranks. Under a militant leadership they began preparations for the grueling contest for delegates, which everybody foresaw must be a fight to the finish. If the curse of slavery was ever to be removed from

Kentucky, the machinery for gradual emancipation must be set up in the new constitution. And Fayette County, the home of the chief exponents of both factions, was, as usual, the battleground.

On the eve of hostilities the proslavery party of the Bluegrass paused long enough to entertain Lincoln's old personal and political enemy, General James Shields, United States senator-elect from Illinois. In 1842 Shields, then state auditor—vain, blustering, socially ambitious but extremely sensitive, who sometimes referred to himself as “the gallant bachelor from Tyrone County, Ireland”—had been a victim of Mary Todd's devastating wit. The *Sangamo Journal* had published several communications to the editor, with Shields as the subject, purporting to have been written by a poor old widow who called herself “Aunt Becca of Lost Townships.” Having poured a stream of scalding satire over the bewildered bachelor, the writer in one of her letters changed tone, made violent love to him, offered her hand in marriage, and described herself as “not over sixty, just four feet three in my bare feet and not much more around the girth; and for color I would not turn my back to nary a gal in the Lost Townships.” The epistle closed with a postscript: “If he concludes to marry, I shall enforce one condition, that is, if he should ever happen to gallant any young gals home of nights from our house he must not squeeze their hands.”⁵

Lincoln had assumed responsibility for the letter, and hotly incensed, Shields challenged him to a duel. Lincoln, with his enormous reach, towering head and shoulders above the stockily built, short-armed Shields, selected cavalry broadswords of the largest size as weapons.⁶ But as they reached the scene of battle on “Bloody Island,” in the Mississippi, below Alton, the counsel of friends prevailed, and the duel was called off “with honor to all concerned.”⁷

On Thursday, February 15, 1849, “the gallant bachelor from Tyrone County” was given a warm welcome to Mary Todd's

home town and a public dinner tendered to him at the Phoenix Hotel. "In response to a complimentary toast," said the *Observer*, "General Shields made a beautiful and eloquent speech which drew forth repeated applause from the company." And the account of the banquet concluded with the obvious statement that after "a number of voluntary toasts were drunk, the greatest hilarity and good feeling prevailed, and the company separated about six o'clock in the best possible spirits."⁸

A few days after the departure of General Shields the emancipationists wheeled a heavy gun into position and fired the first shot of the memorable campaign for delegates to the constitutional convention. It came in the form of a long and vigorous letter on slavery from Henry Clay, then in New Orleans, to his friend, Richard Pindell, at Lexington. In this letter Clay stated his deliberate conviction of the justice and wisdom of gradual emancipation, and outlined a comprehensive plan for its accomplishment. In conclusion he said: "Kentucky enjoys high respect and honorable consideration throughout the Union and throughout the civilized world; but, in my humble opinion, no title which she has to the esteem and admiration of mankind, no deeds of her former glory, would equal in greatness and grandeur, that of being the pioneer state in removing from her soil every trace of human slavery, and in establishing the descendants of Africa within her jurisdiction in the native land of their forefathers."⁹

This unequivocal declaration of Henry Clay gave a powerful impetus to the cause of emancipation in Kentucky. It was printed in many newspapers throughout the country and severely condemned by the southern press. "Henry Clay's true character now stands revealed," exclaimed the Richmond *Enquirer*. "The man is an abolitionist." "If Kentucky will abolish slavery," declared the New Orleans *Crescent*, "she should take all the responsibilities for the act—if she will join the Northern Allies let her do so at her risk—if she be anxious no longer to make common cause with the South, she has a right to go over, but there is no reason why the other Southern States should

build a bridge to facilitate her passage.”¹⁰ Mass meetings were held and resolutions offered requesting Clay to resign his seat in the United States Senate. But the old mariner faced the tempest with serenity. “As you were absent I sent to Richard Pindell a letter on the Emancipation question,” he wrote his son James. “I regret to hear that it was not popular. I suppose that my letter will bring on me some odium. I nevertheless wish it published. I owe that to the cause, and to myself, and to posterity.”¹¹

On April 14 citizens of Lexington and Fayette County met at the city hall to select representatives to the statewide emancipation meeting shortly to be held at Frankfort. Edward Oldham, Senator Todd’s business partner, was in the chair, and after Henry Clay and Robert J. Breckinridge had addressed the meeting, the following resolutions were adopted:

Resolved: That this meeting, composed of citizens of the County of Fayette, met in pursuance of public notice, to consider the question of slavery in this Commonwealth, considering that hereditary domestic slavery as it exists among us:

1. Is contrary to the natural rights of mankind,
2. Is opposed to the fundamental principles of free government,
3. Is inconsistent with a state of sound morality,
4. Is hostile to the prosperity of the Commonwealth,

We are therefore of opinion, that it ought not to be made perpetual, and that the convention about to meet to amend the constitution of this state affords a proper occasion on which steps shall be taken to ameliorate the condition of slavery, in such way as shall be found practicable in itself, just as regards the masters of slaves, and beneficial to the slaves themselves.¹²

But not even the *Observer’s* idolatry of Henry Clay could induce it to swallow the “Emancipation heresy” contained in these resolutions. “If gentlemen do go on *resolving upon the fundamental rights of mankind* as applicable to the slave population,” warned the editor, “they will most surely rouse the sleeping lion whose step will be as majestic as his roar will be terrible.”¹³

On the following Saturday a "Union" meeting composed of proslavery advocates from both the Whig and Democratic parties assembled at the courthouse and adopted a series of counterresolutions:

Resolved: That the institution of slavery, as it exists in Kentucky, is not "inconsistent with a state of sound morality," nor is it prejudicial to the best interests of the Commonwealth, nor to the real happiness of the negro himself.

Resolved: That any provision in the new Constitution for the immediate or gradual emancipation of slavery in our state, would be fraught with incalculable injury to the people of our Commonwealth.

Resolved: That we will not support any candidate for the convention who is in favor of the Negro Law of 1833, (so called) being incorporated in the Constitution; or who is in favor of either constitutional or legislative emancipation.¹⁴

Following these skirmishes the proslavery Union party of Fayette nominated Judge Aaron K. Woolley, son-in-law of Robert (Old Duke) Wickliffe, and his kinsman, Robert N. Wickliffe, for delegates to the convention. The emancipationists selected Dr. Robert J. Breckinridge and Samuel Shy as their representatives, and the bitterest political battle ever fought in Kentucky was on. Though the emancipationists of Fayette were in the overwhelming minority, they made up for their lack in numbers by the ability and courage of their leaders. The Union party had no such champion as the eloquent "Bob" Breckinridge with his clear, resonant voice and keen logic, deadly as the thrust of a rapier, nor had they an equal to that dauntless Knight of the Bowie Knife, Cash Clay, who already was deeply worried about the Doctor.

Breckinridge was a preacher—a man of God—with neither training nor experience in personal combat. Yet his withering sarcasm, his bitter denunciation of slavery and all its works, invited bodily assault at any time. This bothered Cash greatly until he contrived a device for the Doctor's protection which he believed, all things considered, might do fairly well.

One evening he drove out to "Braedalbane," country seat of the Breckinridges since the early days of the Republic when the Doctor's father sat in the cabinet of Thomas Jefferson. Finding his colleague in his study working on the speech with which he intended to open his campaign, Cash plunged at once into the object of his visit. The times were rough. They would be rougher as the contest went on. Breckinridge would be constantly exposed to the reckless frenzy of proslavery fanatics who would not hesitate to take his life or to do him serious harm. Feeling deep concern for his safety, Clay said that he had personally designed a weapon especially for the Doctor's inexperienced use, which he had just had made by a silversmith in Cincinnati. He then produced the wickedest-looking knife that anybody in the Bluegrass had ever seen or heard of—with a seven-inch blade, two inches in width at the hilt—and proceeded enthusiastically to demonstrate its wonderful simplicity of construction and efficiency of operation.

Strapped securely but loosely under the left arm, it hung from its scabbard of coin silver—unlike all other knives—*handle down*, the blade held in place by a spring at the hilt. A grasp of the handle would trip the spring and release the long, curved, razor-sharp, double-edged blade at "belly level"! No assailant would ever be looking for a weapon drawn from that position. With the utmost economy of motion, all the Doctor had to do as the foe advanced upon him, Cash explained, was to "point the instrument at his navel and *thrust* vigorously!"

It is not known how regularly the good Doctor wore this grisly gift, but years later, when showing it to his youngest son, he confided that he always felt sinful when he had it on. "Every time I gestured heavenward," said he, "that infernal knife thumped against my ribs!"¹⁵

Clay's prediction about rough times ahead soon came true. In McCracken County two candidates, Judge James Campbell and Benedict Austin, engaged in several joint debates. "Insulting and contemptuous language passed between them."

However, at Wyatt's campground they "shook hands and dined together," seemed to be on more friendly terms, and friends believed that all danger of personal altercation was over. Next afternoon they met again in the courthouse at Paducah. Presently in the course of his remarks Judge Campbell began to relate a story which, since Austin was a Catholic and their former difficulties well known, threw the crowd into consternation. The Judge said that when Mrs. White, a daughter of Governor John Adair, was in Rome, she "was anxious to see the Pope, but when informed that all who visited the Pope, except sovereigns, were required to kiss his big toe," she declined "because she herself was a sovereign."

As the Judge finished his anecdote, Austin leaped to his feet, his face livid with rage, and shouted, "Your statement is as false as hell!" A fist fight immediately followed, in the midst of which Judge Campbell pulled his pistol and shot Austin dead on the platform.¹⁶

Everywhere in the Bluegrass, Cassius M. Clay was the Moses of the emancipationists. Unintimidated by threats of violence, he harangued hostile audiences from every stump, denouncing the enemies of gradual emancipation with scorching invectives and pleading the cause of the slave with all the power of his magnetic personality.

At one of the villages near Lexington large posters announced that no antislavery speeches would be permitted under penalty of death. Some of the citizens sent for Clay, and promptly at the appointed hour, with his old gray carpetbag on his arm, he walked unattended down the center aisle of the packed courtroom, mounted the rostrum, and calmly faced the muttering, jostling crowd.

"For those who support the laws of our country," he announced in an even, steady voice, "I have this argument," and he placed a copy of the Constitution on one end of the table. "For those who believe in the Bible, I have an argument from this," and he placed a copy of the New Testament on the other end of the table. "And for those who regard neither the laws

of God or man"—the speaker paused and fixed his dark piercing eyes upon the most threatening group in the audience—"I have this argument," and he laid a brace of long black-barreled pistols with his bowie knife on the table in front of him. Then he plunged without interruption into his speech.¹⁷

Campaigns for the General Assembly added further excitement to the already overwrought situation. Early in the summer Robert S. Todd was nominated by the Whigs to succeed himself in the Senate. His opponent was Colonel Oliver Anderson, also a Whig but running on the Union ticket, the owner of a hundred slaves and one of the strongest proslavery advocates in the state.

With political lines largely swept away, Todd soon found himself in serious difficulty. Anderson attacked him, as had a former opponent, in the most vulnerable spot, his slavery record in the legislature. He charged Todd with being an emancipationist at heart. He called attention to the fact that during all the years that Todd had represented Fayette County, both as representative and senator, he had steadily opposed the repeal of the Nonimportation Act to the very end and, after its repeal, had voted against the Immunity Act, intended for the protection of all persons who had hitherto violated the Negro Law.

These assaults on their candidate were sharply criticized by those proslavery Whigs who for various reasons were not in sympathy with the Union ticket. "Colonel Anderson," wrote a Todd supporter who signed his card "X," "is so much put out by the nomination of Robert S. Todd as a candidate for the Senate, that he makes statements to his prejudice which he must have known to be incorrect. He calls him the Emancipation Candidate. It is not so—for one I would gladly own him as a brother in the cause. He is a gallant and able Whig—opposed to all kinds of emancipation and a terribly popular man. Ah! There is the secret."¹⁸

On June 13 Todd again made a public statement through the *Observer* "To the voters of Fayette County," concerning his views upon the all-absorbing subject of the day. "Knowing

that considerable excitement exists on the subject of Emancipation, Slavery, etc.," he said, "I feel it due to myself and those whom I offer to represent, to show the position I have heretofore, and now occupy, on those subjects." He then reminded his constituents that the present constitution recognized Negro slavery as an institution that pre-existed both of the earlier constitutions of Kentucky and was inserted after "mature deliberations"; that "it was believed then to have become too much identified with the interests of the state to be successfully assailed, and that it is now thrice as great. I therefore consider it an impracticable question, and particularly so, in the absence of an unanimity which is indispensable to its success. That unanimity is not to be expected." He denied that he was for emancipation or that he would "interfere with slavery as a vested right in any manner whatever."

Todd admitted that he had been "ever in favor of the Act of 1833, prohibiting the importation of slaves into the Commonwealth," and that he "would individually be willing to see it incorporated in the new constitution. However," he said somewhat evasively, "this question must be settled by the convention, and cannot by possibility be subject to the decision of the Senate, whose duty and oath would require them to *observe, not make* constitutions; but if the question should come before the Senate (I being a member) and the opinion of a majority of my constituents should be different from my own, I should feel myself bound, (as the question is only one of expediency) to represent their views instead of my own—that being the duty of a *representative*."¹⁹

One may well imagine the impression that Senator Todd's statement made on his son-in-law at Springfield. Lincoln knew very well that Todd was no abolitionist, nor except for his close personal friendship for Cassius M. Clay had he been identified with antislavery agitation in any way. But he also knew that Robert S. Todd was a man who sincerely deplored the existence of slavery, that his public record in quieter times showed a consistent opposition to all forms of the slave traffic,

that he took pride in never having sold a slave or having bought one in many years.²⁰ Yet the position that Todd now took was certainly a disappointment to Lincoln. A condition in the body politic which could cause so sturdy a character as Robert S. Todd to equivocate upon a vital principle for the sake of mere "expediency" must indeed be serious. It is little wonder that as Lincoln watched the struggle in Kentucky and read the card of his father-in-law, he began to feel, as he told Major Whitney, his "first, real specific alarm about the institution of slavery."

In reply to Todd's card Colonel Anderson restated his own principles with vehement emphasis. "I am," he said, "what may be called a *thorough pro-slavery* man. So far from admitting the institution to be a necessary evil, I believe it tends to exalt the free population and would be unwilling to give it up, even if by a word I could remove the negro population to Africa. So far from deeming it inconsistent with a sound state of morality, I believe it to be recognized and countenanced both by Scriptures of the Old and New Testament." As for the emancipationists who advocate sending slaves to Liberia, he said:

The wings of fancy are called to the rescue, and laden with a load so heavy, so black, so entirely African, that it is with difficulty that they can ascend to the regions of poetry, but after a long struggle, worthy of a nobler cause, they do get into the seventh heaven of imagination, and oh! the scene of ineffable beauty, of indescribable loveliness that is depicted! Millions of negroes roaming beneath the green palm trees, by the side of meandering rivers, and in the enjoyment of civilization, the arts and sciences—and all from Kentucky! Then another chord is struck, the African harp rings again, and we hear of all Africa from the low sunny plains of the Nile to where the lordly Niger flows through its burning sands—everywhere there is a negro—being leavened by this little band of freed Kentucky slaves.

The Colonel then argued at length that the history of mankind showed beyond doubt that there must always be slavery of one kind or another, and that the question for the freemen

of Fayette, especially the nonslaveholding whites, to decide was whether they would rather see the Negroes slaves or perhaps their own children as "menials and cooks and scullions in the kitchens of more wealthy neighbors."

"I repeat," said Colonel Anderson, "all that I have said with regard to the position of R. S. Todd and can prove it. Who constituted a majority of the committee which nominated him? Emancipationists. Who, almost, if not entirely, conducted the proceedings of the meeting which nominated him? Emancipationists." He reiterated the declaration of former Chief Justice Robertson that "his views were identical with those of Mr. Todd upon the subject of emancipation" and then quoted Judge Robertson as saying, "Slavery in Kentucky is a moral and political evil, a curse to the white race."

Turning his attention to the anonymous X who had recently defended Todd, he said:

Would it however be deemed out of place for me, in conclusion, to offer by way of suggestion that the *youngster* who wrote this scurrilous article, for it is impossible that a person full-grown to man's estate should be silly enough to be caught in such a fool scrape—would it, I say, be out of place to suggest that the young gentleman has some dark-skinned Dulcinea in view, by whom he hopes to rear an interesting family of little *kinkey-heads*, and that therefore he thinks it but acting the part of an affectionate paramour and father to do all he can toward their emancipation.²¹

And so the canvass went grimly on, with Todd and Anderson, the candidates for the constitutional convention, and Breckinridge and Clay speaking to the excited citizens of various communities wherever a crowd was gathered in the villages, at crossroad stores, country meetinghouses, and voting places. "Old Fayette," observed the Louisville *Weekly Courier*, "is the theater of a more lively discussion on the subject of slavery than any other portion of our state."²²

On Friday, June 15, a tragedy occurred which added more fuel to the flames and further widened the breach between the contending factions. A regimental muster was in progress at

the village of Foxtown on the Lexington-Richmond turnpike. It was announced that Squire Turner, the proslavery candidate for the convention from Madison County, and Cassius M. Clay would address the gathering that afternoon from a stand erected in a nearby woodland. Sharp exchanges had already passed between the two men on previous occasions, and it was freely predicted that a personal encounter could no longer be averted.

Turner opened the debate, as usual, with a violent, sarcastic denunciation of Clay. He revived the old controversy over the removal of *The True American* and read extracts from that paper which he charged were responsible for the "late stampede of the slaves of Fayette." At the conclusion of Turner's speech Clay took the stand and launched a vicious, abusive counterattack, which was interrupted by Cyrus Turner, the eldest son of the candidate, who rushed toward the speaker gesticulating wildly. "You are a damned liar," he shouted, and Clay, jumping off the platform, struck him a staggering blow in the face with his fist.

In an instant Clay found himself surrounded by the relatives and friends of his adversary. Attempting to draw his bowie knife, he was struck on the head with a club in the hands of Alfred Turner, and the weapon was jerked from his grasp. Just then Thomas Turner, Cyrus' brother, thrust a six-barreled revolver in his face and snapped it three times, but the percussion caps failed to explode. Dazed and reeling from blows on the head, Clay attempted to recover his knife, and seizing the blade with his bare hand, which cut his fingers to the bone, he wrested it from the possession of its captor, but not before he had received a deep stab in the left breast over the heart. Blinded with fury and pain, bleeding from many wounds, and with a gaping hole in his chest, Clay retaliated by burying his knife to the hilt in the abdomen of Cyrus Turner.

Both wounded men were carried into a nearby residence and placed in adjoining rooms. A doctor was summoned, but it was not believed that either would live until he arrived. A telegram was dispatched to Clay's mother at Frankfort: "Dear

Madam: Your son, C. M. Clay, was very dangerously stabbed at Foxtown, a few hours since. If you would see him alive, come quickly. The wound is in the lungs. Yours truly, Robert H. Stone."

The *Observer* on the following day announced that "Gentlemen who witnessed the conflict, state that Mr. Clay is dead, and that his adversary is not expected to recover," but the next issue made a correction, saying that "Mr. Clay still lives, but his adversary Mr. Turner lingered until about 12 o'clock on Saturday night when he expired."²³

The news of the Foxtown tragedy spread swiftly all over Kentucky, thence into other states,²⁴ and bitterness between the contending parties became even more intense, if that were possible. Slavery advocates proclaimed Turner a martyr who had fallen "in the great cause of white supremacy" before the reckless blade of that "Abolitionist madman, C. M. Clay." On the other hand, the emancipationists charged that the fatal encounter was but another instance of foul conspiracy on the part of the slavocracy to intimidate and murder, which had been again thwarted by the stubborn courage of a "dauntless champion of human freedom."

Then in the midst of all the turmoil, hatred, and bloodshed, with the swift, silent flight of a bird of prey, the gaunt, hooded specter of pestilence swooped down upon the warring factions. An autopsy upon the body of Tom O'Haver, an old Irishman who worked in a stone quarry at Lexington, resulted in a diagnosis of cholera, and in a few days the dreaded disease in virulent form was sweeping like wildfire through the stricken city. Men, women, and children, rich and poor, white and black, were suddenly prostrated, lingered a few hours in violent pain, and died. As many as forty deaths occurred in twenty-four hours, and the terror of the inhabitants was indescribable. Business came to a standstill, and many of the stores on Main Street closed altogether. Hundreds of the wealthier citizens hastily locked up their houses and fled northward to distant watering places.²⁵



DR. BRECKINRIDGE'S KNIFE, DESIGNED BY CLAY
Original owned by the author



CASSIUS CLAY'S "DRESS-UP" BOWIE KNIFE AND DIRK
Originals owned by the author

The Reverend Mr. Pratt wrote in his diary: "Our town has looked deserted, scarcely anyone from the country in, and quite a number afflicted, nearly everyone has symptoms. It is supposed 1500 white persons have left town from alarm. I have not yet been affected or my family except my wife night before last I think had symptoms."²⁶

The more courageous of those who remained at home strove to calm the fears of the public and prepared to combat the epidemic as best they could. The city poorhouse was turned into a hospital, and all inmates of the workhouse were released to nurse the sick. The farmers of the county sent droves of sheep to town for slaughter, and Dudley & Carty and W. K. Higgins opened their large wholesale grocery stores to the destitute free of charge. At the suggestion of scientists at Transylvania batteries of field artillery were parked in various sections of the city and fired in salvos at regular intervals in an effort to rend the atmosphere by concussion and thus in some mysterious manner reduce the violence of the disease.

As weeks went by, the inhabitants of Lexington grew more accustomed to the situation and fought the deadly plague calmly and doggedly in the daytime, but horror enough to try the stoutest hearts increased with the coming of night. Lard-oil street lamps sputtered feebly through palls of smoke from booming cannon and threw weird, grotesque shadows across the heavily laden death carts as they jolted and clattered over rough cobblestones on their way to the graveyards. Streamers of crape flapped in the night wind from the doorposts of many darkened, silent houses. Down the empty streets the night watchman monotonously intoned the passing hours, and to those who lived in the vicinity of Mary Todd's old home near the Baptist churchyard came the ghastly sound of falling clods and the thud and scrape of pick and spade, digging, digging, digging.²⁷

"I have seen many distressing sights," wrote the Reverend Mr. Pratt on July 15, "whole families under the scourge & none to administer. Multitudes have left town for the hills. There are three preachers of us who remain & visit constantly, viz.

Dr. R. J. Breckinridge, Dr. Miller & myself. God has graciously spared and preserved us. . . . I found at Mrs. Trimble's 7 down & no white person to aid her & she just off her bed. May the Good Lord have mercy on us."

And on July 29 Pratt wrote again: "On Friday night, it rained all night and on Saturday morning the worst form of cholera broke out, nearly all dying that were attacked in 36 hours. . . . O, What afflicting times. May the Good Lord lift his rod from off the community." Next day he noted that he had attended four funerals "in less than an hour. I only made a few remarks at each, sung & prayed."

Yet in the midst of such public travail interest was by no means lost in the approaching election. Since crowds could no longer gather in town, the opposing candidates addressed the voters in various places in the county where the epidemic was not prevalent. Cassius M. Clay, still confined to bed by his wounds, issued defiant cards to the press, and Robert S. Todd and Colonel Oliver Anderson continued their vigorous campaign for the Senate. But the battle was now being waged in the face of a relentless and impartial foe. Three of the candidates for the convention—Woolley, Shy, and Wickliffe—fell ill at the same time, and Breckinridge, the remaining candidate, announced that his duties as a minister would prevent the filling of any more speaking engagements. "My friends and neighbors," he sadly wrote, "are sick and dying around me. The cholera continues to prevail very severely, and a great many of the people are gone off from fright."²⁸

On July 7 the deaths of Drs. Whitney and Brockway were announced, a few days later the illness of Dr. Jones proved fatal, and by the middle of the month so many physicians had died that an appeal was made to nearby towns for medical aid. Henry Clay and Mrs. Clay were stricken at "Ashland" but soon recovered. The death of Dr. Bascom, president of Transylvania, was announced in the newspapers but proved to be erroneous.

Early in June, Robert S. Todd had as usual taken his family to "Buena Vista" for the summer. The railroad ran through

his place, and he rode up to Lexington almost every day on the cars to attend to his duties as president of the Branch Bank of Kentucky. The hotly contested race for the Senate occupied all of his spare time, and he canvassed the district thoroughly, riding long distances in all kinds of weather, both on horseback and in his buggy.

On Saturday, July 7, he made a long and fatiguing speech at Spencer's Mill near the village of Fort Springs, and on Tuesday he was seized with a sudden chill, followed by severe prostration. Growing rapidly worse in spite of all his physicians from Lexington and Frankfort could do, he made his will, signed it with a weak, tremulous hand, and on Monday morning, July 16, 1849, at one o'clock, he died.

On the afternoon of the seventeenth his body was brought to Lexington "and followed to its final resting place by a large concourse of sorrowing friends." The terrible toll of the plague had made it necessary to open up a new cemetery on the Lees-town pike, and here in "Boswell's Woods" beneath the tall, waving bluegrass sheltered by aged, moss-grown oaks, the mortal remains of Robert S. Todd were buried on the crest of a gentle slope above the old spring where his father and the little band of Kentucky hunters had named the town of Lexington.²⁹

"We are again," said the *Observer* the next day, "in the discharge of our melancholy duty, compelled to chronicle the death of another of our most respected, beloved, useful and distinguished citizens, Robert S. Todd, Esq. . . . He had impressed himself indelibly upon the country for the zeal, fidelity and ability with which he discharged all his various and multiplied public duties. No man more truly and faithfully conformed to all the requisitions of virtue and benevolence, and no man occupied a higher position in the society in which he moved than Robert S. Todd. He was emphatically 'the noblest work of God—an honest man.' "

The death of the Whig candidate for the Senate made the prospect of victory for the Union ticket brighter than ever.

But the Whigs were not ready to concede defeat. J. R. Dunlap was chosen as Todd's successor, and the canvass went on. The new candidate sought at once to placate the proslavery members of his party by deploring the "agitation of a subject that is exciting the Commonwealth to an alarming extent." He announced his opposition to "any interference between master and slave without the consent of the master." But Dunlap was not the shrewd, veteran politician that his predecessor had been. Lacking Todd's great personal popularity and experience, the new candidate was no match for his doughty antagonist, who called attention to the fact that his new opponent had, while a member of the House in 1833, been instrumental in passing the "iniquitous" Nonimportation Act and even now admitted that he favored the submission of the question to the convention.

Meanwhile, the epidemic continued, and Mayor O. F. Payne issued a proclamation fixing Friday, August 3, as a "day of general fasting and humiliation to fervently implore the Almighty for the arrest of the step of the Angel of Death, which is now so manifestly and terribly abroad among us."³⁰ And on Friday morning, as church bells tolled the call to prayer, Judge Woolley, the leader of the Union ticket for the convention, was again stricken, lingered through the day, and died at sundown.

Concerning Judge Woolley the Reverend Mr. Pratt made the following entry in his diary:

Heard that Judge A. K. Woolley was at point of death. Went immediately to see him but could not gain admission. Poor man he died that evening, he was taken in the morning. He was a candidate for the Convention & within 3 days of the election when God cut him down. A most talented man but great indulger in eating & drinking & gambling, etc. The night before he was on a frolic til late evening defying the Cholera I am told. I had a talk with him on Religion a few days before, told me he was skeptical but would not be called an infidel, he despised one, asked for loan of Edwards on Will, Butler's Analogy, said wanted to believe in Christianity as it was only this that would redeem him from bad habits.³¹

With the election for the legislature and the convention only a few days off, the *Observer* wrote an editorial of warning to its proslavery readers. It reminded them that "the excitement of a protracted and most arduous canvass" makes it certain that the friends of emancipation will poll their full strength, and that "the opponents of emancipation must permit no consideration to prevent them from a prompt expression of their opinions at the poll."³²

The election was held throughout Kentucky on August 6, 7, and 8, and the proslavery ticket swept the state. In Fayette the victory of the Union party was overwhelming: Anderson for the Senate, and Dudley, Woolley's successor, and Wickliffe for the convention, carried every precinct in the city and county.³³ Through violence, bloodshed, bitterness, and stormy debate, unchastened by the ravage of an awful plague, the people of the commonwealth had clung stubbornly to their ancient idol.

As Abraham Lincoln read the result of the election in his native state through the columns of the exulting *Observer*, the outlook for freedom seemed hopeless. Out of all the counties in Kentucky not a single emancipation candidate had been elected to the convention, although they had polled thousands of votes.

"There is no peaceful extinction of slavery in prospect for us," wrote Lincoln to Judge Robertson of Lexington; "the signal failure of Henry Clay, and other good and great men, in 1849, to effect any thing in favor of gradual emancipation in Kentucky . . . extinguishes that hope utterly."³⁴ Lincoln had watched the struggle with deepest interest. Now that it was over, he was beginning to formulate his immortal declaration that "a house divided against itself cannot stand." The house had not fallen, but in the conviction of friend and foe that the cause of emancipation was forever lost in Kentucky, it had ceased to be divided.

Milly and Alfred

THE CRISP sunny days of early autumn saw the final disappearance of the great scourge in Lexington and Fayette County. But mute witnesses on every hand bore evidence of the havoc it had wrought. Empty barrels, boxes, and wastepaper littered the back yards, alleys, and sidewalks, and grass was growing in the streets. Show windows of business houses, unwashed for months, were streaked with dust and grime. The doors of some stores were closed, with tattered, weather-stained pieces of crape on the knobs; appraisers were busy inside preparing stocks of merchandise for the auctioneer.¹

The plague had laid a heavy hand upon the once parklike countryside. Beautiful estates were now surrounded by stagnation and decay. Farming implements stood rusting in the fields, weeds choked the yellow corn rows, uncut wheat lay tangled and twisted on the ground, and broad, blackened leaves of tobacco drooped, rotting on the stalks.

The will of Robert S. Todd had left the bulk of his estate to his wife Elizabeth, his slaves to her for life and then to her sons and daughters, with the remainder of his property to be

"divided equally in just proportions" between his "first and second children."² At the September term the will was presented to the Fayette County Court, but George Todd, Mrs. Lincoln's youngest brother, appeared and objected to the probate on the ground that the document bore only one witness instead of two as required by law. After consideration the court sustained the objection, rejected the will, and directed that the estate be distributed equally among all the heirs in the manner prescribed by the statutes of Kentucky.³

This unexpected turn of affairs was a sad blow to the Widow Todd and her eight children, six of whom were small and utterly dependent upon her for support. It meant that the widow, who now qualified as administratrix, would be compelled to convert her husband's estate, including his one-third interest in the firm of Oldham, Todd & Company, into cash at forced sales and divide it among all of Robert Todd's fourteen children.

At this stage of the proceedings Abraham Lincoln seems to have been selected by common consent to represent the majority of the first children, four of whom lived in Springfield. There is no indication that either he or his wife or any of the other Springfield heirs took any part in the proceedings to invalidate the will, but now that probate had been refused and the estate had to be settled, Lincoln assumed the role of legal adviser to the interested nonresidents. And it was time that he did so, for there were already important matters in Lexington that demanded immediate attention.

About a year before his death Robert S. Todd had filed a suit in the Fayette Circuit Court against Robert Wickliffe for the recovery of a large estate, formerly owned by his cousin, Mary Todd Russell, which she had conveyed to Wickliffe shortly after her marriage to him in 1826.⁴ Todd and Wickliffe had not been on good terms, either personally or politically, for many years, and this litigation had aroused the deepest enmity between them. Under the law the death of the plaintiff had

abated this action, and no further steps could be taken without the intervention of Todd's heirs.

However, if Wickliffe cherished a hope, as there is reason to believe he did, that the children of his deceased adversary would drop the case, such a possibility vanished upon the filing of a bill of revivor on October 2, 1849, in behalf of "Abraham Lincoln and Mary A. Lincoln, his wife; Ninian W. Edwards and Elizabeth P. Edwards, his wife," and the other heirs of Robert S. Todd—"who charge as in the original & cross bills of their ancestor."

It is apparent from the record that Wickliffe felt greatly outraged at this renewal of a contest which he thought had terminated at the grave in Boswell's Woods. And the answer which he filed on October 11 bore unmistakable evidence of his resentment. Refusing to yield an inch of ground in the litigation, Wickliffe put Lincoln and the children of the deceased plaintiff strictly upon proof as to every material allegation of their bill of revivor—even as to their relationship to Robert S. Todd. "Defendant states," said he, in spite of the fact that the closest intimacy had existed for years between Todd's first children and the members of his own family, "that he does not know them so as to admit or deny their names or relationship."

His specific reference to Mary Lincoln and her husband was even more startling. Mary Todd had been the intimate girlhood companion of his daughter Margaret, who later became Mrs. William Preston.⁵ They had practically lived in each other's homes during their school days, were roommates at Mme. Mentelle's, and had kept up their correspondence after Mary's marriage. Even as recently as her visit to Lexington in the summer of 1848 Mrs. Lincoln, regardless of her father's quarrel with the Old Duke, had been so friendly with the Wickliffes that Lincoln felt it necessary to caution her in one of his letters against the "danger of wounding the feelings" of her "good father by being openly intimate with the Wickliffe family."⁶ Robert Wickliffe therefore knew Mary Todd almost

as well as he knew his own daughter, yet suspecting no doubt that Lincoln, as the lawyer of the family, was responsible for the renewal of the suit, the Old Duke with grim irony wrote in his answer that Robert S. Todd "did have a daughter he *thinks* they called Mary who he understands married a member of congress, *his name not recollected.*"

By the middle of October the lawsuit in the Fayette Circuit Court and business affairs connected with the settlement of the Todd estate required Lincoln's presence in Kentucky, and the cholera having disappeared, he and Mary arrived in Lexington about the twentieth for a visit of three or four weeks.⁷ It is evident that Lincoln was already informed in a general way as to the nature of the Wickliffe suit in which he had lately intervened. However, there is no indication that he knew much about the details of the case, or what the actual facts were, until he came to Lexington, read the record, and talked with Robert J. Breckinridge and other close friends of Robert S. Todd. It was then that he found a tragic, sordid story interwoven with the pending litigation.

When Colonel John Todd marched away with his regiment in August, 1782, to engage Simon Girty's besiegers at Bryan's Station, he left a wife, Jane Todd, and an infant daughter, Mary Owen Todd, in the fort at Lexington. A few days later, upon his death at the Battle of Blue Licks, his young daughter fell heir to all of her father's vast landholdings in Kentucky. Mrs. Todd later became the wife of Thomas Irvine. At about the age of seventeen Mary Owen Todd married Colonel James Russell, who died in 1802, leaving an only son two years old bearing the name of his illustrious maternal grandfather.

The young Widow Russell was probably the wealthiest woman in all Kentucky. She owned nearly two thousand acres of the finest land in the Bluegrass, most of it adjoining the town of Lexington. In a fine old colonial mansion, surrounded by many slaves, she lived in the most elegant style. Her son, John Todd Russell, was his mother's fondest hope—a youth

of rare charm and striking personal appearance, over six feet in height, unassuming, generous, amiable, a favorite among old and young.

By the early summer of 1816 the boy had completed his preparatory training for Princeton, and while waiting for college to open in the fall, spent several months at the home of his grandmother, Mrs. Irvine, who was just recovering from a long and serious illness. Here, so the story went, he met Milly, a comely octoroon slave about fifteen years old, who was the joint property of Mrs. Irvine and her brother. The girl had been educated and carefully reared as a house servant and, as it is said, was "a young woman of refined manners, who bore little evidence of her Ethiopian blood."

Thrown constantly in each other's company, young Russell and Milly developed a secret but ardent attachment which continued through the summer. Then autumn came, and Russell left for Princeton, while Milly remained in the Irvine household. During the months that followed, she tenderly nursed her convalescent mistress until the spring of 1817, when she became the mother of a fine, sturdy boy "as fair in complexion as any white child in Kentucky."

At the end of two years young Russell came back to Lexington but never returned to college. Three years later, while on his way home from a journey to Gallatin County, he was seized with a sudden and violent illness at Shelbyville. Realizing that the end was near, he acknowledged Milly's boy Alfred to be his son, "thought of him in the last throbs of life and did what he considered necessary to insure the freedom and respectability of the child." Then, on October 12, 1822, John Todd Russell died,⁸ "an only son, the chief and earthly hope of a mother."

Soon after his death the Widow Russell quietly undertook to purchase Milly and Alfred, but her uncle, who owned a part interest in them, had become financially involved, and his creditors, as Robert Wickliffe said, "extorted" from her

"the enormous sum of twelve hundred dollars for Milly and her boy child." And so the octoroon girl and Alfred passed into the hands of Widow Russell and came to live in her elegant home. The boy was described as a "bright, lovely, well-behaved lad who, though held in nominal bondage, was treated as the child of a friend rather than as a slave and who, though illegitimate, was yet the acknowledged son of the unquestioned heir-male of these great estates."

Thus matters stood on October 12, 1826, when the Widow Russell married Robert Wickliffe, himself one of the wealthiest men in Kentucky and a widower with seven small children. Several months later, according to the allegations of Todd's bill of complaint, Mrs. Wickliffe began preparations to set Milly and Alfred free and send them to Liberia, when she discovered "to her horror" that under the marriage laws of Kentucky they and all her other slaves had become the sole property of her husband, who refused to emancipate them unless she conveyed to him her entire estate, valued at something like a quarter of a million dollars. Finding that "she had made her own grandchild his slave, Wickliffe, as the price of his liberation, extorted from her a conveyance of all her property," and the deeds therefore were duly executed by her on September 12, 1827. Having liberated her grandson at such tremendous sacrifice, Mrs. Wickliffe hurried Alfred and Milly off to Liberia, where "the last reputed descendant of John Todd, if he still lives, is in poverty on the barbarous shores of Africa."

The bill of complaint closed with the allegations that no children had been born to Mrs. Wickliffe by her last marriage and that "the wife of the defendant is now dead and a short time before her death she frequently requested the said Robert Wickliffe to reconvey her estate to her which he refused to do," and asked the court to adjudge that all of the property which had been received by him from his wife should be restored to her own blood kin.

While the Lincolns were on their way to Lexington, Robert Wickliffe had filed a voluminous, forty-page answer to the statements of the complaint and to Lincoln's revivor. He vehemently denied that his wife had conveyed her property to him under duress or coercion and that there had been any motive for it except "love and affection." He stated that Robert S. Todd had managed the estate of his cousin, Mrs. Wickliffe, prior to her marriage to the defendant; that Todd had expected to be the beneficiary of her will at her death, which hope was frustrated by her marriage; that since Todd had learned of the "Marriage settlement," the defendant "had experienced nothing from him but a sullen and ill-will conduct"; that "the said Robert S. Todd cherished undying hatred against this defendant, believing that but for him the estate sued for would have been secured to him"; and finally that Todd had circulated the story that by marrying Wickliffe, his cousin "had made her own grandchild his slave," and that her husband "had extorted from her a deed of all her property to rescue the boy Alfred, the child of her deceased son, from defendant's ownership."

Wickliffe did not deny that young Russell was the father of Milly's son, but he declared "that the story of the boy Alfred, whether true or false, was promulgated to ruin the peace and happiness of his wife," that the publicity given to this "old and long forgotten tale" distressed Mrs. Wickliffe greatly, and that "with this malignant shaft in the bruised heart of the victim, his wife sunk into an untimely grave."⁹

Wickliffe stoutly denied that Milly and Alfred had been sent to Liberia in poverty, but alleged that "defendant allowed his wife to take whatever money of his these slaves needed for their transportation which was some several hundred dollars, the exact amount he does not know, nor does he care, and he repeatedly gave his wife money to send them after they left." As for Alfred, Wickliffe said: "He is now, I am informed, a respectable Methodist divine, and a perfect gentleman in his manners. When Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, was attacked,

he stood the powder and shot of the enemy and fought in her defense most bravely."¹⁰

The case of *Todd's heirs v. Robert Wickliffe* progressed rapidly after Lincoln arrived in Lexington. But as he sat in Judge Robertson's stuffy little office on Jordan's Row while depositions were being taken, he must have realized that the complainants had only a remote chance of winning the suit. Witness after witness, including Mary Lincoln's old French teacher, the infirm, palsied, beloved Mme. Victorie Charlotte Mentelle, testified that Robert Wickliffe, in spite of an irascible disposition, had been a most exemplary husband, that he and Mary Todd Wickliffe were devoted to each other, and that Mrs. Wickliffe in her last years and on her deathbed repeatedly expressed her complete satisfaction with the transaction which had given her husband absolute title to all her property.

As the taking of proof went on and it became apparent that the charge of coercion could not be sustained, Todd's heirs switched their line of attack and began the introduction of testimony to the effect that John Todd, before leaving for the battlefield of Blue Licks, had made a will devising all of his property to his daughter *for life only* and, at her death, to "his brothers and companions in peril," or to their children. This will, according to Lincoln and his coplaintiffs, had been destroyed when the clerk's office burned in 1803, and witnesses, including the Reverend Robert Stuart, father of Lincoln's first law partner, John T. Stuart, and Mary's grandmother, the venerable Elizabeth Parker, were introduced to prove the contents of that document.

However, the three weeks that Lincoln spent in Lexington on this trip were not all devoted to business and litigation. As in 1847, there was much opportunity for visiting among kinsfolk and friends. The Widow Todd and Mary's young half brothers and sisters were at "Buena Vista," and the Lincolns visited them there, riding back and forth to Lexington on the steam cars. Henry Clay, again United States senator-elect, did

not leave home for Washington until November 1, and if Mary took her husband to visit her friend at "Ashland," he no doubt heard much concerning the defeat of gradual emancipation in the recent election.

Denton Offutt had left for the West only a few days before Lincoln's arrival, taking with him the following recommendation from an old friend:

Ashland, October 27, 1849

The bearer hereof, Mr. Denton Offutt of Kentucky, being about to travel in other parts of the U. States and perhaps in Europe, I take great pleasure in recommending him as a person who possesses uncommon skill in the treatment of horses and domestic animals, especially in training, breaking and curing them of diseases. Such is the extraordinary effect of his system in the management of the horse, that he will, in a very short time, render the wildest animal gentle and docile, in so much that he will subject it to his easy control and direction. Mr. Offutt has been many years engaged in the study and practice of his remarkable method of dealing with the horse and has many and satisfactory evidences of his great success.

Henry Clay.

At the same time Offutt also obtained a letter from Lexington's distinguished surgeon, Dr. Benjamin Dudley of the Transylvania medical faculty, stating that "from personal observation" he could "testify" not only as to Offutt's remarkable ability in quickly taming horses so that they "were perfectly safe," but his "even greater promptitude" in deciding "on the mode of training the horse according to his endowments." Dr. Dudley felt "authorized to commend Mr. Offutt to the entire confidence of all who were interested in the subject."¹¹

There were those who thought a term in Congress had improved Lincoln's personal appearance. Wearing a black frock coat and pantaloons of broadcloth, satin vest, black cravat of the choker style, and a tall, moleskin hat, with a short, circular blue cloak, the Springfield lawyer did not suffer in comparison with the best-dressed members of the Lexington bar.¹²

Bluegrass hemp growers had nominated Mary's uncle, Dr. John T. Parker, for hemp agent of the state of Kentucky, and the Illinois politician on November 5 wrote the secretary of the navy a warm endorsement of Dr. Parker. "I personally know him to be a gentleman of high character, of excellent general information, and, withal, an experienced hemp grower himself," wrote Lincoln; "I shall be much gratified, if Dr. Parker shall receive the appointment."¹³

Mrs. Lincoln's brother Levi, the city treasurer, now lived in the old Todd home at the corner of Short Street and Mechanics Alley.¹⁴ Here, and with "Grandma" Parker next door, the Lincolns spent more time, perhaps, than anywhere else.¹⁵ And here Abraham Lincoln was again a witness to the utter degradation and misery of that institution which had given him so much concern in recent months.

While in Congress, he had been interested in a bill to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia and, as he said, had voted for the Wilmot Proviso, prohibiting slavery in Texas, "as good as forty times." Then, upon the heels of the emancipation slaughter at the polls in Kentucky, Lincoln had arrived in Lexington to be confronted by the shocking disclosure that a cousin by marriage, a kinsman of his own wife, had been a slave, with the taint of Negro blood beneath a Caucasian skin, and was now an exile upon the "barbarous shores of Africa."¹⁶

The slave coops in the yard of Pullum's jail along Mechanics Alley were still plainly visible from the Parker and Todd residences.¹⁷ The Pullum property was now under lease to Lewis C. Robards, the leading "Negro buyer," who had also acquired the old Lexington Theater, which stood on Short Street directly across the street from Levi Todd and Mrs. Parker. This latter establishment under Robards' able management was now a busy and quite select slave market.¹⁸

The rear of the theater property was fenced in by a high stone wall, and Negroes were confined within this enclosure while waiting their turn on the auction block inside. The stage had been left just as it stood when the building was a

playhouse, and now men, women, and children were paraded up and down and put through their paces under the scrutinizing gaze of Negro traders from various parts of the Deep South.

On the ground floor of a commodious two-story brick house adjoining the old theater, Robards had his office, a large bare room with a desk in one end, the inevitable liquor bar along one side, and several tables and chairs in the center. Slave drivers, catchers, and traders found this a convenient place to loaf, "talk shop" over ale and brandy, and play cards.

In the comfortable, well-ventilated, and amply furnished apartments upstairs over the office, Robards kept what he, with a significant wink and smile, called his "choice stock." The interior as it appeared to Lincoln in 1849 was no doubt substantially the same as when one of his dearest friends, Orville H. Browning, saw it four years later. "After dinner visited a negro jail," wrote Browning in his diary. "Tis a place where negroes are kept for sale—Outer doors & windows all protected with iron grates, but inside the appointments are not only comfortable, but in many respects luxurious. Many of the rooms are well carpeted & furnished, & very neat, and the inmates whilst here are treated with great indulgence & humanity, but I confess it impressed me with the idea of decorating the ox for the sacrifice. In several of the rooms I found very handsome mulatto women, of fine persons and easy genteel manners, sitting at their needle work awaiting a purchaser. The proprietor made them get up & turn round to show to advantage their finely developed & graceful forms—and slaves as they were this I confess rather shocked my gallantry. I enquired the price of one girl which was \$1600."¹⁹

Robards' "choice stock," according to his own testimony, was famous among "discriminating" buyers throughout the South. It was their custom to visit the "luxurious" apartments of which Senator Browning spoke, select a half dozen or more of the most beautiful quadroon and octoroon girls, and then take them to the "inspection" room in the ell of the house,



MEGOWAN SLAVE JAIL. *From original in Mulligan Collection*



WHERE ROBARDS KEPT HIS "CHOICE STOCK," AS IT LOOKED BEFORE IT WAS RAZED
Photograph taken by the author

where they were stripped to the skin for the purpose of confirming Robards' "warranty of soundness."²⁰

Robards was the shrewdest, most enterprising, and unscrupulous of all the "Negro buyers" in Kentucky. In the autumn of 1849 he was at the height of his prosperity. He carried a standing advertisement in the *Observer* that he was in the market to "purchase a large lot of merchantable negroes for which I will pay the highest cash market-price."²¹ The repeal of the Nonimportation Act the previous spring had opened wide the gates of opportunity, and Robards was making the most of it. It was charged in litigation, and not denied, that he was "regularly engaged in the slave traffic, buying and selling slaves and sending them out of the state into the Southern slave states," and that "his jail is the rendezvous for a gang of kidnappers that operate along the Ohio River seizing free negroes who live in the extreme southern border of the state of Ohio and sending them to Robards in Lexington."²²

At the Pullum jail on Broadway, Robards kept the common run of his slaves, herding men and women promiscuously into the crowded slave coops, and its squalor and wretchedness were painfully apparent to Lincoln as it stood under his very eyes day after day. There were little children as well as adults in those fetid pens. Martha, five years old and free, had lived with her aged uncle on the banks of the Ohio River near Portsmouth, until one night a marauding band of white "nigger thieves" broke open the door with an ax, "grasping the wool on the top of her old uncle's head," and carried the little girl and her six small brothers and sisters away into captivity to Robards at Lexington.²³ There was also Isva, age two, suffering from sores on her head and the "phthsick," and "a negro girl named Henrietta, about one year of age, of black complexion and entirely blind."²⁴ At this particular time the dungeon was filled with advanced cases of Negro consumption.

Lincoln sadly noted the changes that had taken place in the institution of slavery around Lexington since his visit of

two years before. It too had felt the blighting touch of the great scourge. Many of the largest slaveholders had been suddenly carried away by the cholera without time to make a will. Hundreds of slaves, like those that belonged to Robert S. Todd, who would never have been sold now came under the hammer of the auctioneer to settle the estates of their deceased owners, and the records indicate that no fewer than 150 Negroes went on the auction block during the three weeks of Lincoln's visit, while scores of others must have changed hands at private sales.²⁵

Lincoln, who was far less tolerant of slavery than Browning, could not have been less affected by these scenes than was his old friend, who recorded in his diary that upon his arrival in Lexington he "saw a negro man sold at public auction in the Court House yard. . . . Although I am not sensible in any change in my views upon the abstract question of slavery," observed Browning, "many of its features, that they are no longer familiar, make a much more vivid impression of wrong than they did before I had lived away from the influence of the institution."²⁶

The Kentucky Negro had an instinctive dread of slavery as it existed in the Deep South. Lurid tales of horror told by old scarred slaves throbbed in his ears from his earliest recollection around the cabin fireside. The threat to sell him "South" had long been an effective method of correction, and now, confronted by the hideous reality, he was terror-stricken and desperate. Many slaves were running away; others were prowling about the country, committing all sorts of petty misdemeanors and occasionally some grave offense. The watch bell rang at seven P. M., and all slaves found on the streets after that hour were subject to the punishment of "35 lashes well laid on the bare back." Vigorous floggings at "the three-pronged poplar tree in the court-house yard" were familiar sights to those who passed along the public square.

The situation seemed all the more pathetic, as Lincoln saw the slave power daily entrenching itself more strongly in the

constitutional convention then in session at Frankfort. The Todd farm was only five miles from the statehouse, and it is more than probable that Lincoln attended some of the sessions; certainly he kept himself fully informed of all the proceedings. In spite of the fact that not a single emancipation delegate had been elected, the slavery question in all its various aspects was receiving more discussion than any other subject. "For two solid weeks," complained the *Observer*, "the convention has been engaged in the discussion of the slavery question, with nearly all the speeches on one side. For what end is all this discussion? The patience of the people is becoming exhausted by this perpetual speechifying."²⁷

By the time Lincoln was ready to return to Springfield it was unmistakably evident that the convention had subordinated every other interest of the state to the perpetuation of slavery in Kentucky. A motion to incorporate the Nonimportation Act of 1833 was decisively tabled. Even the ballot system of voting was rejected on the ground that it might prove injurious to slave interests. The convention not only retained the clauses on slavery in the old constitution, but new and far more drastic provisions were enacted. No person could voluntarily emancipate his slaves, "except on condition that such emancipated slaves be immediately sent out of the state." Free Negroes were forbidden to immigrate to Kentucky. Then, in order to settle the question for ever, the convention wrote into the bill of rights the declaration: "The right of property is before and higher than any constitutional sanction; and the right of an owner to his slave, and its increase, is the same and is as inviolable as the right of the owner to any property whatever."²⁸

In the midst of these activities of the lawmakers for stripping the Negro of every human attribute, an item appeared in the *Louisville Courier*, which came regularly to the Todd home, ironically illustrating the anomalous position of the slave in Kentucky despite all efforts to reduce him to the status of a mere chattel.

NEGRO LAWYER AT AUCTION

There will be offered to the highest bidder at the office of J. S. Young, on 5th Street, this morning at 9:00 o'clock—A valuable *yellow man* supposed to have his blood fully half mixed with the Anglo-Saxon, stout and active and weighing 175 pounds. A very good *rough lawyer*; very healthy and title good—said negro is not fitted to practice in the Court of Appeals, or in the Court of Chancery, but take him in a common law case, or a six-penny trial before a County Magistrate and “he can’t be beat.” Said yellow man can also take depositions, make out legal writings, and is thoroughly adept at brow-beating witnesses and other tricks of the trade.²⁹

By November 10 Lincoln had finished his business in Lexington, and he and Mary started home. Judge George Robertson, local counsel for the Todd heirs, was left in charge of the Wickliffe case, which would shortly be ready for final submission to the court.³⁰ It was agreed with Mrs. Todd that a suit should be brought by her as administratrix for the purpose of settling the estate of Robert S. Todd, paying off debts, and dividing the balance as required by law.

On this visit to Kentucky, Lincoln had definitely obtained a deeper insight into the problem of slavery than he had hitherto possessed. Personal contact and firsthand observation had given him a grasp of the situation which he could have acquired in no other way. He had closely watched the effect of anti-slavery agitation in the Bluegrass region of his native state since *The True American* had espoused the cause of gradual emancipation. He had seen the freedom of the press quickly overthrown by the force and arms of a popular uprising. He had observed the strife and bitterness, the violence and bloodshed of that memorable campaign of 1849, and the annihilation of the emancipation forces at the polls. Slavery, in the very place where it was said to be most benign, had left etchings on his memory never to be erased—the misery of crowded, vermin-infested slave coops; the degradation of comely octoroons at their needlework in Robards’ luxurious apartments; the anguish of the auction block on Cheapside; the torture of the

whipping post in the courthouse yard; the callous indifference of the populace to the unhappy and hopeless situation of the bondman, under the devout conviction that the institution was authorized and sanctioned by Holy Writ. And with it all, the shadow of Alfred lay deep in Lincoln's heart.

From his experiences and observations in Kentucky, Lincoln must have been convinced of two principles which hereafter guided his course on the great question of the age:

First: That antislavery agitation in the states where slavery already existed only sank it deeper into the vitals of the body politic.

Second: That if the spread of slavery was to be prevented, it must never be allowed to obtain the slightest foothold in new territory, because, as had been demonstrated in Kentucky, once entrenched, it seemed to thrive and flourish upon opposition.

A few months after Lincoln had returned to Springfield, he and John T. Stuart, his former law partner, were driving home in a buggy from court in Tazewell County. As they neared the village of Dillon, they began discussing the political situation. "As we were coming down the hill," says Stuart, "I said 'Lincoln, the time is coming when we shall have to be either all Abolitionists or Democrats.' He thought a moment and then answered ruefully and emphatically, 'When that time comes my mind is made up, for I believe the slavery question can never be successfully compromised.'"³¹

The Buried Years

ON SATURDAY, January 26, 1850, the *Observer* announced the death of Mary Lincoln's grandmother: "At her residence in this city, on Monday night last," said that newspaper, "Mrs. Elizabeth R. Parker died at an advanced age. Mrs. Parker was one of the oldest residents of our city, and was universally esteemed and beloved by all who knew her for her many excellent qualities. She was an exemplary member of the Presbyterian Church and died in the full hope of the Christian."

Mrs. Parker was in feeble health when the Lincolns were in Lexington, and the ordeal of testifying in the Wickliffe suit had heavily taxed her waning strength. She had outlived her husband fifty years, and on the previous Christmas Eve, realizing that the end was near, she had written her will, making special provisions for her slaves. "Being weak in body, but sound in mind," she said, "it is my earnest wish that my servants Prudence, Ann and Cyrus have their freedom given them," and she provided an annuity which her executor should "pay over to Prudence as long as she may live."¹

The news about "Grandma" Parker found the Lincolns in deep anxiety over an illness in their own family. Four-year-old Eddie, whose name had appeared so frequently in the correspondence between Mary and her husband during the summer of 1848 and who had wept over the plight of the homeless kitten in his Grandmother Todd's kitchen at Lexington, was desperately ill with a disease that baffled the attending physicians. For more than seven endless weeks Mary and her husband sat beside the little cot in the upstairs bedroom, striving desperately against fate. Then, on the morning of February 1, as drizzling rain dripped from the wide eaves of the house on Eighth Street, little Eddie died.²

"As you make no mention of it, I suppose you had not learned that we lost our little boy," wrote Lincoln sadly to his stepbrother nearly a month later. "He was sick fiftytwo days & died the morning of the first day of this month. It was not our *first*, but our second child. We miss him very much."³

Shaken and disconsolate in their first great sorrow, seeking escape from surroundings that constantly reminded them of their little son, Mary and her husband took advantage of business in connection with the settlement of the Parker estate and came back to Lexington several weeks after Eddie's death. It was Lincoln's first visit in springtime, and now he saw the Bluegrass country in its fairest aspect. Violets, redbud, and lilacs were blooming; gentle showers had washed the woodlands fresh and green; crystal brooks were running full over moss-grown riffles through the meadows toward the winding, forked Elkhorn.

But Lincoln was in no mood to appreciate the artistry of nature. Try as he might, he could not shake off the gloom that enshrouded him. Frequently he found himself pondering the mystery of the hereafter and, as it seemed to him, the improbability of immortality. During his early manhood at New Salem copies of Volney's *Ruins* and Paine's *Age of Reason* had fallen into his hands. Profoundly influenced by them, he had

occasionally argued against some of the doctrines of Christianity.⁴ After he went to Springfield and began the practice of law, these problems had given him less concern, and since entering politics, he rarely or never discussed religion. But now in the shadow of bereavement the old doubts and misgivings rose up to perplex him again.

One day while browsing aimlessly in the Todd library, Lincoln came upon a thick volume of 364 pages bound in heavy sheepskin with a title page that attracted his attention. It read: "*The Christian's Defense*, Containing a fair statement and impartial examination of the leading objections urged by infidels against the antiquity, genuineness, creditability and inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, enriched by copious extracts from learned authors."⁵ The name of the writer caught his eye. He was Dr. James Smith, formerly of Shelbyville, Kentucky, now pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Springfield, the preacher who had conducted the funeral of Lincoln's little boy.

Rather curiously he began reading the preface. Like Lincoln, the author stated that he had been called a deist in early life, had read the *Age of Reason* and Volney's *Ruins*, and that "led astray by the sophisms of Volney and Paine, without demanding proofs or seeking objections, he jumped at the conclusion that Religion was a fraud contrived to govern mankind." As he read on, Lincoln found that the pugnacious Scot not only denied the conclusions of Hume, Volney, Paine, Taylor, and other noted infidels, but boldly and effectively returned their fire shot for shot. In short, closely knit sentences, he forcefully argued the inspiration of the Bible and "the great miracle which lies at the foundation of Christianity, the resurrection of Jesus Christ." It was at once apparent that the author possessed a tremendous grasp of his subject, and with a growing interest Lincoln was reading the book in earnest when family difficulties intervened.⁶

The Widow Todd, as administratrix of Robert S. Todd's estate, had filed an action in the Fayette Circuit Court to dis-

solve the partnership of Oldham, Todd & Company, and wind up the decedent's affairs. Dr. George Todd, the youngest of the first children, who had prevented the probate of the will, now consulted Lincoln, as a representative of the Springfield heirs, with a long list of grievances against his stepmother.⁷ She had, according to Todd, failed to list among the assets of the estate a valuable quantity of silverware which she had "appropriated to her own use." She had also failed to give the appraisers certain "slaves and other livestock," and had sold one of the slaves without accounting for the money. George complained bitterly of Mrs. Todd's settled hostility and charged that he had been compelled to leave "his father's house in consequence of the malignant & continued attempts on the part of his stepmother to poison the mind of his father toward him, and that Robert S. Todd, mortified that his last child by his first wife should be obliged, like all his other first children, to abandon his house by the relentless persecution of a stepmother, agreed to pay his son's medical tuition fee, if he would return home, which he did." George insisted that his sisters, Elizabeth Edwards, Frances Wallace, Mary Lincoln, and Ann Smith, should join him in a suit against Mrs. Todd to compel restitution of the property.

To this recital of grievances Lincoln replied that he understood that the silverware had been given to Mrs. Todd as Christmas presents by her husband, who had caused her initials to be engraved on the various pieces; that the slaves which she had not listed in her inventory were received from her mother under an arrangement which provided for their ultimate emancipation and had never belonged to Robert S. Todd; that Mrs. Todd had retained no property belonging to the estate except that to which she was entitled as dower. He further informed his brother-in-law that he had investigated the sale of the slave and had found that Robert S. Todd at the time of his death owned a Negro named Bill who was unruly and was then confined in one of Robards' jails in Lexington, that Todd had requested on his deathbed that this slave be

sold, which was done, and the proceeds applied to the payment of a debt he owed at the bank.

Lincoln strongly advised his impetuous relative against such a suit and declined to allow any of the other heirs to participate. He pointed out that the widow with her small children and the settlement of a complicated estate on her hands already bore a heavy burden. But instead of taking the advice of his brother-in-law, and indignant at his attitude, George filed a bill of complaint, making Lincoln and all the other first children defendants, which, though vigorously prosecuted, was, as predicted, without avail.

Settlement of the Parker estate, the chief reason for Lincoln's present trip to Lexington, next demanded his attention. Mary's grandfather, Robert Parker, had left his property by will to his wife Elizabeth for life, with remainder to her children. Now that she was dead, the heirs of Eliza Parker Todd were entitled to their share of the estate. After a consultation among all the heirs, it was agreed that a partition suit should be brought in the Fayette Circuit Court to divide the considerable real estate holdings in the city of Lexington.⁸

Business finished, Lincoln took his departure several days later, leaving Mary and their son Robert for a more extensive visit with Mrs. Todd at "Buena Vista." He had not been able to finish *The Christian's Defense* while at Lexington, but he had read enough to make him seek an interview with Dr. Smith upon his return to Springfield. Thomas Lewis, whose law office adjoined Lincoln's, was an elder in Dr. Smith's church, and Lewis introduced him to the author of *The Christian's Defense*, who afterward said of that interview: "I found him much depressed and downcast at the death of his son and without the consolation of the Gospel." Following his talk with the minister, Lincoln borrowed the author's own copy of the book, and thereafter rented a pew in the First Presbyterian Church, which he kept as long as he lived in Springfield. Undoubtedly Smith's book had a permanent influence on the religious views of Abraham Lincoln.⁹

Throughout the spring and summer of 1850 Lincoln followed with grave interest the stirring events then going on in Congress.¹⁰ The old slavery volcano was again in eruption, and the Senate was swept by fiery debates. California had applied for admission to the Union as a free state; New Mexico and Utah were ready to organize into territories. The South was determined that the power of the free states should not be increased, and threats of disunion were loud and violent. In the midst of all the clamor and excitement the venerable Sage of Ashland was the central figure above the footlights in the last great drama of his long and brilliant career.

Summoned by Kentucky from retirement at Lexington, Clay gathered his failing strength for a final effort to save his distracted country. Lincoln had been in Lexington on the very day that the aged statesman climbed feebly into his carriage and started eastward to meet the impending crisis. Eagerly the former congressman read all the speeches that appeared in the newspapers. He was gathering knowledge and forming convictions which would set his course and nerve his arm in the tragic days of the future.¹¹ The Lexington press devoted many columns to the activities of the man whose policies, except on the slavery question, it had supported with unswerving devotion for more than forty years.

The compromise measures presented by Clay provoked furious discussion, and Jefferson Davis with other southern senators denounced them in contemptuous terms. But the silvery-haired gladiator stood his ground, parried their thrusts, and delivered mighty blows in return. When Barnwell of South Carolina rose and criticized the senator from Kentucky for denouncing a secession speech made by Rhett at a public meeting in Charleston, intimating that the opinions of the speaker might be those of South Carolina herself, Clay was on his feet in an instant.

"Mr. President," he replied, "I said nothing with respect to the character of Mr. Rhett. I know him personally and have some respect for him. But, if he pronounced the sentiments attributed to him of raising the standard of disunion

and of resistance to the common government, whatever he has been, if he follows up that declaration by corresponding overt acts"—the old man's fingers clenched and he turned his flashing eyes upon the South Carolina senator—"he will be a traitor and I hope he will meet the fate of a traitor."¹²

Wearily the debates dragged along through the month of June into hot, sultry days of midsummer. Then on a morning late in July all the corridors leading to the Senate chamber were thronged with an eager crowd that vainly sought access to the galleries already packed with a perspiring, restless mass of humanity. The House of Representatives was deserted. Its members were jammed in the aisles and behind the last row of desks on the Senate floor.

The gay bonnets and brilliant gowns of the ladies in the audience gave a picturesque embellishment to the occasion. The scene was reminiscent of other years when Calhoun, Clay, and Webster—young, ambitious, and in the full vigor of manhood—stood on the very pinnacle of their glory, but today the great triumvirate was broken. Exhausted by his desperate efforts in behalf of a doomed cause, Calhoun had been three months in his grave, where his two aged colleagues, who had carried his wasted body to its last resting place, were soon to follow him.

Over near the chair of the Vice-President sat Webster. Time had bleached and thinned his once dark, heavy hair. The weight of years had bent his massive frame; the luster had vanished from those deep-set eyes that now gazed so dreamily, so retrospectively, from beneath his somber, overhanging brow. At his desk near the center aisle sat Henry Clay, the oldest of the immortal three. Gaunt, haggard, worn out by the long struggle, he spasmodically clutched his sunken chest in an effort to stifle the hollow cough that racked him night and day.

Then, as the gavel of the Vice-President fell, the old man feebly rose to his feet in the midst of thunderous applause and, with every eye upon him, slowly addressed the chair. At the beginning his voice faltered badly, and the spectators bent

forward with hands cupped about their ears to catch the indistinct words that came from his tremulous lips. But as he proceeded, his strength gradually returned; the loud rasping cough grew fainter and ceased; the tall form straightened to full height; the infirmities of age seemed to disappear—gallant Harry of the West, with sonorous accents and irresistible charm of manner, stood once more in the forum.¹³ In tones of deepest pathos the senator from Kentucky pleaded for the preservation of the Union. With sweeping gestures he hurled defiance at those who would take the nation's life:

Mr. President, I have said that I want to know whether we are bound together by a rope of sand or an effective capable government competent to enforce the powers therein vested by the Constitution of the United States. And what is this doctrine of Nullification, set up again, revived, resuscitated, neither enlarged nor improved, nor expanded in this new edition of it, that when a single state shall undertake to say that a law passed by the twenty-nine states is unconstitutional and void, she may raise the standards of resistance and defy the twenty-nine. Sir, I denied that doctrine twenty years ago—I deny it now—I will die denying it. There is no such principle. . . .

The Honorable Senator speaks of Virginia being my country. This Union is my country. The thirty states is my country. Kentucky is my country. And Virginia no more than any of the other states of this Union. She has created on my part obligations and feelings and duties toward her in my private character which nothing upon earth could induce me to forfeit or violate. But even if it were my own state—if my own state, contrary to her duty, should raise the standard of disunion against the residue of the Union, I would go against her, I would go against Kentucky in that contingency as much as I love her.

The galleries broke out in a storm of applause, and as order was restored, Mr. Clay proceeded:

Nor am I to be alarmed or dissuaded from any such course by intimations of the spilling of blood. If blood is to be spilt by whose fault is it to be spilt? Upon the supposition, I maintain it would

be the fault of those who raised the standard of disunion and endeavored to prostrate this government, and, Sir, when that is done, as long as it please God to give me voice to express my sentiments, or an arm, weak and enfeebled as it may be by age, that voice and that arm will be on the side of my country, for the support of the general authority, and for the maintenance of the power of this Union.¹⁴

As the concluding words of his last great speech died away and Clay sank exhausted into his seat, pandemonium broke loose on the floor and in the galleries. Heedless of all parliamentary restraints, men and women rushed down the aisles and clambered over desks and benches to shake his hand and kiss his quivering, tear-stained cheeks.¹⁵

The aged senator had made, perhaps, his greatest oratorical effort. For him it was a personal triumph, but his cause was momentarily lost. He retired to the peaceful atmosphere of Newport to escape the sultry summer in Washington. The task of reopening the compromise issue fell to the rising Democratic senator from Illinois, Stephen A. Douglas.

When Congress adjourned on September 20, 1850, all of Clay's compromise proposals had been adopted, and Lincoln believed, as did many others, that the slavery question was settled for all time; that Congress, as he later said, had put "the seal of legislation against its spread and all had acquiesced in the compromise measures of 1850."

Now that the great issue seemed closed, Lincoln felt that his political days were over. He had suffered keen disappointment that no popular demand arose for his re-election to Congress. "There is nothing about me which would authorize me to think of a first class office," he had confided to Joshua Speed, "and a second class one would not compensate me for being snarled at by others who want it for themselves."¹⁶ So, forsaking politics, as he thought, for ever, Lincoln now settled down to the practice of law with more diligence and energy than ever before.

Once again he began to ride regularly the Eighth Judicial Circuit, composed of fourteen counties stretching from Sangamon on the west a distance of 120 miles to Vermilion on the east at the Indiana line. The country was sparsely settled, and in spring and fall the mud was deep, the rivers and creeks were swollen and treacherous. Some members of the bar visited only a few of the most accessible county seats in the district, while others made nearly all of them. Only three, however—David Davis, the presiding judge, Abraham Lincoln, and Leonard Swett—rode the entire circuit; Davis because he had to; Lincoln and Swett because they loved it.

Always scrupulously clean and smoothly shaved, but clad in an ill-fitting suit with the coat sleeves and trousers several inches too short, his tall, battered stovepipe hat looking "as if a calf had gone over it with its wet tongue," carrying an old saddlebag filled with books, papers, and change of linen, and a huge, faded, green cotton umbrella, the knob gone from the handle and a piece of twine tied around it to keep it from falling open, with "A. Lincoln" in large muslin letters sewed inside—Lincoln was the drollest figure and the most popular lawyer in all the fourteen counties.

Hotel accommodations on the circuit were usually of the worst sort; food was poorly cooked; the bedrooms were small and often anything but clean, and so crowded during court week that four or five lawyers frequently slept in the same room; while defendants on trial, witnesses, lawyers, jurors, and judge all sat at one long table in the dining room.

Yet in spite of hardships and discomforts the circuit had its brighter side and compensating joys. In the evening, after court had adjourned, a gay and versatile group would gather in Judge Davis' room. There was Davis himself, the dignified judge while on the bench, but off of it the affable companion that loved a laugh. There was Logan, the scholarly; Stuart, the shrewd and kindly; Swett, the clever; Baker, the handsome; Lamon, the amusing; Oglesby, the eloquent; Campbell, the musical; and Ficklin, and Somers, and, always, the tall, angular,

genial favorite—Lincoln. Hour after hour would swiftly pass in song and story, and Judge Davis' fat sides would shake as Lincoln related some humorous anecdote in his droll, imitable way.

Then, after midnight, when the merry crowd had dispersed and retired, Lincoln, with a candle at the head of the bed, his long legs protruding over the footboard, would read Shakespeare or Burns until far into the hours of the morning, apparently unmindful of the lusty snoring of Judge Davis or his other roommates.¹⁷

Lincoln had just returned to Springfield from a trip on the circuit when a dispatch from Washington on Tuesday, June 29, 1852, announced the death of Henry Clay. For several weeks the old statesman had been sinking steadily in his apartments at the National Hotel. "One of the most remarkable phenomena," said the *Springfield Illinois Daily Journal*, "accompanying the sickness and gradual dissolution of Mr. Clay, was a species of second sight—a living dream, . . . which brought to his bedside not only the persons of his living friends, but also those who had departed this life for many years. What a blessing it must have been to a man of such warm affections as Mr. Clay, to be thus surrounded by all he loved—to have the grave, which was about to encompass him, surrender the dead, by the magic attraction of his departing spirit."¹⁸

That evening a large crowd of Springfield citizens assembled at the courthouse "for the purpose of making arrangements to commemorate the event that has filled the land with sorrow. . . . Honorable Abraham Lincoln was called to the chair," and after several speeches had been made, the chairman appointed a committee of thirteen citizens to make "suitable arrangements" to be reported at an adjourned meeting on the following night. On Wednesday evening the committee made its report and plans were adopted for "paying a tribute of respect to the Memory of Henry Clay." Tuesday, July 6, was

Danville, Ill. May 27, 1853.

George B. Kinkead, Esq
Lexington,

Ky-

I am here attending court a hundred and thirty miles from home, and when a copy of your letter of this month, to Mrs Edwards, reaches me from him, last evening - I find it difficult to suppress my indignation towards those who have got up this claim against me - I would really be glad to hear Mr Hemmingsway explain how he was induced to swear he believed the claim ^{to be} just - I herewith enclose my answer - If it is insufficient either in substance, or in the authentication of the oath, return it to me at Springfield (where I shall be after about ten days) stating the defective points - You will perceive in my answer, that I ask the Petitioners to be sworn to file a bill of particulars, stating names & residences, &c - I do this to enable me to absolutely disprove the claim - I can easily prove by independent evidence, every material statement of my answer, and if they will name any living accessories or one of whom I have received their money, I will, by, that man disprove the charge - I know it is for them to prove the claim, rather than for me to disprove it, and I am unwilling to trust the oath of any man, who either made or prompted the oath to the Petitioners - Write me soon - Very Respectfully - A. Lincoln -

LINCOLN'S "INDIGNATION" LETTER TO GEORGE B. KINKEAD

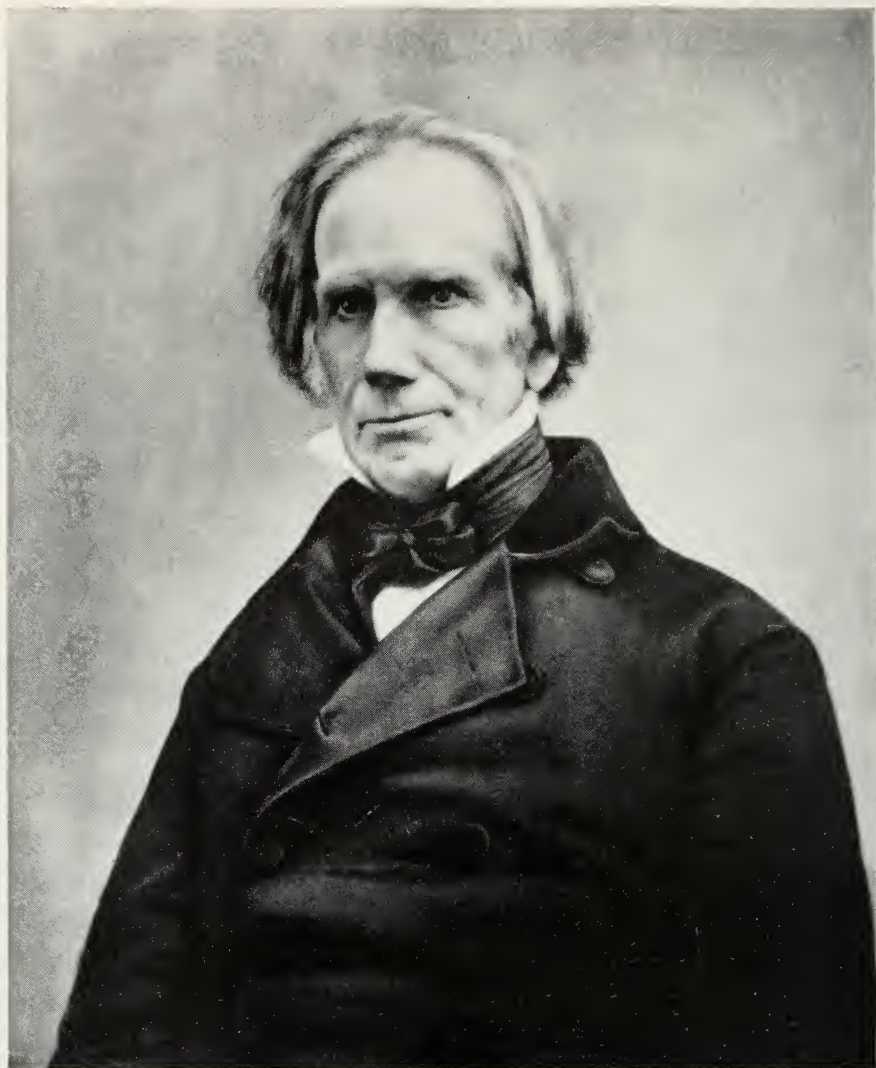
Original owned by the author



LEXINGTON IN 1850. *From a print owned by the author*



THE OLD LEXINGTON COURTHOUSE, WHERE LINCOLN WAS SUED



HENRY CLAY. *Courtesy of the Missouri State Historical Society*

designated as the time, and the hall of the House of Representatives as the place, and it was resolved: "That Honorable Stephen T. Logan be requested to deliver an oration suitable to the occasion."

For some reason the committee changed its selection of a speaker and chose Lincoln, who had scant opportunity for preparation. The Whig convention would assemble in Springfield on the seventh, and much was yet to be done toward plans for organization. Furthermore, he was busy at work on the defense of a one-legged veteran of the Mexican War named Williamson, formerly the postmaster of Lacon, whose trial on a charge of robbing the mails was then set for July 12 in the United States District Court.¹⁹

But Lincoln willingly accepted the invitation, and hastily began the preparation of an obituary eulogy, a task for which he was not particularly well fitted either by temperament or by experience. Meanwhile, after impressive ceremonies in the United States Senate chamber, the most extraordinary procession ever witnessed by the nation, until Lincoln's own funeral cortege thirteen years later, journeyed from Washington to Kentucky. Through Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, Buffalo, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Louisville, the special train, draped in mourning, slowly made its way, bearing the dead body of the Sage of Ashland back home to Lexington.²⁰

On Tuesday morning, July 6, a "procession consisting of Odd Fellows, Temple of Honor, Sons of Temperance, Cadets of Temperance, and a large number of citizens marched to the Episcopal Church" in Springfield where services were read by the Reverend Mr. Dresser. Then, amid the tolling of bells and the firing of seventy-six minute guns, "the procession moved to the Representatives' Hall, where Honorable A. Lincoln pronounced an impressive eulogy on the character and services of the deceased. During the proceedings, business was suspended, doors closed and everything announced the general sorrow at the great national bereavement."²¹

Lincoln began his address by quoting from one of the public journals, "chiefly, because I could not, in any language of my own, so well express my thoughts. . . . 'Alas! who can realize that Henry Clay is dead! Who can realize that never again that majestic form shall rise in the council-chambers of his country to beat back the storms of anarchy which may threaten, or pour the oil of peace upon the troubled billows as they rage and menace around?'" Then Lincoln briefly sketched the long and varied career of his subject; his humble birth in Hanover County, Virginia; his removal to Lexington, Kentucky; his spectacular rise in politics; his "leading and most conspicuous part" in these "great and fearful crises, the Missouri question—the Nullification question, and the late slavery question, as connected with the newly acquired territory, involving and endangering the stability of the Union."

The speaker dwelt upon Clay's lifelong activities in behalf of the American Colonization Society. "I would also," said Lincoln, "if I could, array his name, opinions, and influence . . . against a few, but an increasing number of men, who, for the sake of perpetuating slavery, are beginning to assail and to ridicule the white-man's charter of freedom—the declaration that 'all men are created free and equal.'"

"But Henry Clay is dead," Lincoln observed sadly in conclusion. "His long and eventful life is closed. Our country is prosperous and powerful; but could it have been quite all it has been, and is, and is to be, without Henry Clay? Such a man the times have demanded, and such, in the providence of God was given us. But he is gone. Let us strive to deserve, as far as mortals may, the continued care of Divine Providence, trusting that, in future national emergencies, He will not fail to provide us the instruments of safety and security."²²

Early in October, 1852, the lawsuits at Lexington relating to the settlement of the Todd estate again required the attention of the Springfield heirs. A sharp difference of opinion

had arisen over the disposition of the slaves. Harvey had been appraised at \$700, Pendleton at \$550, and Chaney and her six-year-old daughter Mary Ann and her infant boy about six weeks old at \$950. George Todd contended that the slaves were valued too low. The Widow Todd claimed that the appraisal was excessive. She emphasized the fact that "the face of Harvey was badly scarred," that the boy "Pen," who had "lived with Levi, had been whipped a good deal" and was "delicate and subject to a bleeding at the nose." A few weeks before, George had seized Harvey and Pendleton, finding them, as he claimed, "badly clothed and destitute of bed clothing," and carried them to his home. It was only after much argument and the taking of proof that he was required by the court to return them for sale at public auction at the courthouse door in Lexington.²³

The adjustment of this controversy, however, and the final settlement of the Todd estate did not terminate Lincoln's litigation in the Fayette Circuit Court. On May 12, 1853, Oldham & Hemingway, surviving partners of Robert S. Todd's old firm, brought a suit against Lincoln which was doubtless the most vexatious experience in all the years of his law practice.²⁴ It was alleged by plaintiffs that the firm during Todd's lifetime had sent Lincoln various claims for collection against Illinois customers of the cotton factory, aggregating the sum of \$472.54, and that he had recovered the entire amount and converted it to his own use. At the same time an attachment was also levied on about \$750 belonging to the defendant and his wife, then in the hands of their local attorney.

Lincoln was out on the circuit when the news of this surprising event reached Springfield, but he heard it some two weeks later at Danville. Although the summons did not require the defendant to answer until the first day of the next August term, he sat down at once, wrote out his answer, swore to it before Samuel G. Craig, clerk of the Vermilion Circuit Court, and mailed it with a warm note to his lawyer at Lexington:

Danville, Ills—May 27, 1853

George B. Kinkead, Esq
Lexington,
Ky—

I am here attending court a hundred and thirty miles from home; and where a copy of your letter of this month, to Mr. Edwards, reached me from him, last evening. I find it difficult to suppress my indignation towards those who have got up this claim against me. I would really be glad to hear Mr. Hemingway explain how he was induced to *swear* he *believed* the claim to be just! I herewith inclose my answer. If it is insufficient either in substance, or in the authentication of the oath, return it to me at at [*sic*] Springfield (where I shall be after about ten days) stating the defective points. You will perceive in my answer, that I ask the Petitioners to be ruled to file a bill of particulars, stating *names & residences* &c. I do this to enable me to absolutely disprove the claim. I can really prove by independent evidence, every material statement of my answer; and if they will name any living accessible man, as one of whom I have received their money, I will, *by that man* disprove the charge. I know it is for *them* to prove their claim, rather than for *me* to disprove it; but I am unwilling to trust the oath of any man, who either *made* or *prompted* the oath to the Petition.

Write me soon. Very Respectfully—

A. Lincoln.²⁵

Lincoln's answer was an emphatic denial of the plaintiff's allegations. He stated that the only money he had ever collected for Robert S. Todd was fifty dollars on an old account in 1846, which his father-in-law, while on a visit to Springfield, had directed him to "take and retain it as his own"; that

With the exception of the fifty dollars aforesaid, received by Respondent under the circumstances aforesaid, Respondent denies that he ever received any thing whatever, to which said firm, or said Petitioners could have a pretence of a claim. Respondent further states that when he visited Lexington in the autumn of 1849, as he remembers, he stated this whole matter to said Hemingway and to L. O. Todd, as he now states it; and that, more recently, in the spring of 1852, he again fully stated it, in his sworn answer to a Bill filed for the adjustment of the estate of said Robert S. Todd,

which answer doubtless is on file in the said Fayette circuit court. . . . Respondent cares but little for said fifty dollars; if it is his legal right he prefers retaining it; but he objects to repaying it *once* to the estate of said Robert S. Todd, and *again* to said firm, or to said Petitioners; and he particularly objects to being compelled to pay money to said firm or said Petitioner's which he never received at all.²⁶

At the June term of court Oldham & Hemingway made no effort to have the case assigned for trial, and after adjournment Lincoln wrote Mr. Kinkead: "I feel some anxiety about the suit which has been gotten up against me in your court. . . . I have said before, and now repeat, that if they will name the man or men of whom, they say, I have collected money for them, I will *disprove* it."²⁷

Evidently Lincoln was aware that his brother-in-law, Levi Todd, was responsible for this suit against him. The records show that several weeks prior to the Oldham & Hemingway suit Lincoln and Ninian W. Edwards had sued Levi in the Fayette Circuit Court,²⁸ and Levi had doubtless retaliated by inducing his father's former partners to sue Lincoln.

Without a bill of particulars [wrote Lincoln from Bloomington to Kinkead on September 13, 1853] stating the names of the persons of whom, O. T. & Co claim that I have collected money for them, any proof I can possibly take, will be wide of the mark—can not meet Levi's statement, (which I now suppose he is determined to make) that "I told him I owed the amount attached." . . . This matter harrasses my feelings a good deal; and I shall be greatly obliged if you will write me immediately, *under cover to Mr. Edwards at Springfield, Ills*—telling me first, *when* is the next term of your court; and second, whether I *can* or *can not* have a bill of particulars.²⁹

Under the pleadings the burden of proof was on those who asserted the claim and not, as Lincoln aptly observed, upon him to disprove it. A motion to dismiss for want of prosecution would have been sustained by the court, but Lincoln did not intend to rely on technicalities when his personal integrity had

been assailed. Therefore, when the plaintiffs were finally compelled to file a statement containing the names of the persons whose accounts the defendant was charged with having collected, he promptly assumed the burden of proof himself, and by depositions taken at Shelbyville on November 8, 1853, at Springfield on November 12, and at Beardstown on November 15, Lincoln completely refuted every allegation that Oldham & Hemingway had made against him. This evidence was so conclusive that plaintiffs themselves filed a motion on January 16, 1854, to dismiss the case, which was done at their cost on February 10, when the next term of court convened.³⁰ The incident was closed by the following letter:

Springfield, Ills.
June 16, 1854

Geo. B. Kinkead, Esq.
Lexington, Ky.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 8th. Inst. to N. W. Edwards, enclosing a draft of between two and three hundred dollars (I write from memory only as to the amount) reached here a day or two since, and was, in Mr. Edwards' absence, taken from the P. office and opened by his brother. It was shown to me this morning, and will be kept at the store of which Mr. Edwards is a partner until his return, which will be about six weeks hence & when, doubtless, he will write you.

I ran my eye over the contents of your letter, & only have to say you do not seem disposed to compensate yourself very liberally for the separate services you did for me. Yours truly

A. Lincoln—³¹

The vindication of Lincoln's honor found him on the eve of re-entrance into public life. Momentous events were taking place in Congress, which would arouse the nation and stir the Springfield lawyer to profound depths.

Storm Clouds

EARLY in January, 1854, Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois reported to the Senate of the United States a bill for the organization of the Territory of Nebraska. Twelve days later Senator Archibald Dixon, the old Whig associate of Robert S. Todd in the Kentucky legislature, now filling out the unexpired term of Henry Clay, startled the country by offering an amendment to the Nebraska Bill which in effect repealed the Missouri Compromise and opened vast areas of the West to slavery.

For four months the halls of Congress rocked in the throes of a bitter, violent debate, then unequaled in the parliamentary annals of the nation. Personal encounters were narrowly averted on the floor as hot accusations and retorts, often couched in fighting language, shot back and forth across the aisles.

"He retreats," said Cutting of New York one day in the House, referring to his colleague, John C. Breckinridge of Lexington, "and escapes, and skulks behind the Senate Bill."

Breckinridge was instantly on his feet. "I ask the gentleman to withdraw that last word," he said sharply.

"I will withdraw nothing," retorted Cutting emphatically.

"What I have said I have said in answer to the most violent and personal attack ever made on a gentleman on this floor."

"When the gentleman says I skulk," replied Breckinridge with a metallic ring in his voice, "he says what is false and knows it."

"I do not answer remarks such as the gentleman has thought proper to employ," responded Cutting in the midst of much excitement and cries of "order—order." "They belong to a different arena. I am not here to desecrate my lips by answering in such a tone and manner."¹

That afternoon Cutting sent Breckinridge a note referring to his charge of falsehood and demanding that he "retract this assertion or make the satisfaction due from one gentleman to another." Breckinridge's reply proposed rifles at sixty paces, but Colonel Monroe, second for Cutting, declined the terms on the ground that "the weapon selected is one with which my principal is wholly unacquainted" and for the further reason that "Mr. Cutting's note, not having been intended as a challenge," his principal was the challenged party and therefore had the choice of weapons if a duel was to be fought. But while the seconds of the parties argued technical points of the code duello, friends intervened and the encounter was averted.²

Then, on May 30, 1854—in the words of the jubilant Lexington press—"after a severe and protracted struggle, the friends of equal justice to all the states and of the sovereignty of the people, triumphed," and the Kansas-Nebraska Bill sponsored by Stephen A. Douglas became a law; the great compromise measures of the dead Sage of Ashland were overthrown, and the slave power, booted and spurred and flushed with success, was again firmly seated in the saddle.

Storms of protest swept the country as antislavery newspapers unfolded to their readers the far-reaching effect of this enactment which opened up for slave occupation an area equal to that of the thirteen original states. "I was losing interest in politics when the repeal of the Missouri Compromise aroused

me again," said Lincoln, "but upon the event, I became convinced that either I had been resting in a delusion or the institution was being placed on a new basis—a basis for making it perpetual, national and universal."³ Lincoln, however, was by no means the only person in Illinois alarmed at the trend of public events. Thousands of antislavery men in various sections of the state were aroused to action. They felt that the existing situation should be vigorously and publicly condemned, and in casting about for a fearless spokesman, they selected Cassius M. Clay and invited him to make a series of speeches in Illinois.

It was in response to this invitation that on the afternoon of July 10, 1854, at Springfield the battle-scarred veteran of the Kentucky hustings, Cassius M. Clay, turned his roaring guns upon the *Illinois State Register*, Judge Douglas, and all other advocates of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill in a characteristic address entitled: "The Signs of the Times in our Political World." Having been refused the rotunda of the statehouse, the meeting was held near the city in a grove where the state capitol stands today. From a hastily constructed speaker's stand, heedless of shouts from the audience to "take him down," Clay launched a terrific attack upon those who were either responsible for or condoned the repeal of the Missouri Compromise.

The speaker started out by saying that he found himself somewhat in the condition of John the Baptist who came preaching in the wilderness. Even in his own state—a slave state—the common courtesy of citizenship had never been withheld from him; no courthouse or statehouse door had ever been shut in his face. There was a spirit of magnanimity among Kentuckians that was "superior to such meanness as that." To those who had refused him courtesy today it might afford some satisfaction to know that his father, grandfather, and family kindred had fought on nearly every battlefield in our country from the days of the Revolution and had "helped to purchase with their blood, these privileges which were now enjoyed by

men of to-day." At least he felt himself "no intruder in this capital city of the west."

As to his principles and doctrines, Clay remarked that he stood before his audience as the advocate of constitutional liberty. "The Declaration of Independence asserted an immortal truth. It declared a political equality—equality as to personal, civil and religious rights." It was a modern doctrine that slavery was supported by the Constitution, when in fact it was contrary to the letter and spirit of that immortal document and to the history of its formation. "Slavery was simply tolerated by the framers of the Constitution, but now like the porcupine in the fable, it thrusts out its quills and pronounces itself well satisfied, and if its neighbors don't like it, they may do better somewhere else. . . . It is not the part then of free-men—American Freemen—to act as blood hounds for the slave hunter," he exclaimed.

"Would you help a runaway slave?" shouted a voice from the crowd.

"That would depend upon which way he was running," retorted Clay quickly, and the heckler subsided in the laughter that followed.

"So long as slavery continued a local institution," the speaker resumed, "it should be left to itself." He would oppose to the last any crusade from the North against the South; but when slavery became aggressive and proposed to extend itself over free territories, then he should rise, and stigmatize it as it deserved. He dwelt at length upon the "Nebraska and Kansas outrage." The territory included in this bill was ten times larger than the state of Illinois. It was to be the central point in the great heart of an American civilization. Through it would pass the line of travel from the Atlantic to China and Japan. "As men of commerce, mere men of the world, conscious that slavery leads back to barbarism, we cannot look with indifference upon the conversion of this vast region to slavery. The German, the Irish, the Briton, the American, unite in declaring on this soil must be planted free institutions."

Clay closed his address of two hours and a half with a stirring appeal for a militant organization of freemen which would "strike at the monster aggressor wherever it could be reached under the constitution—an organization of men of whatever politics, of Free Soilers, Whigs and Democrats, who should bury past animosities, and repenting past errors which all have been guilty of, unite in hurling down the gigantic evil which threatened even their own liberty. When men violate the . . . Constitution, put them down. Repeal unconstitutional enactments, restore liberty to Kansas and Nebraska. . . . Slavery must be kept a sectional, and liberty a national institution," and then "the Ship of State would again set forward in her glorious career of Constitutional Liberty."⁴

Lincoln had called upon the Kentucky orator when he arrived in Springfield and was present when he made his speech. "Whittling sticks as he lay on the turf," said Clay, "Lincoln gave me a most patient hearing. I shall never forget his long, ungainly form, and his ever sad and homely face. He was but little known to the world, but his being the husband of my old friend of earlier days caused me to look with interest upon him. I flatter myself, when Lincoln listened to my animated appeals for universal liberty for more than two hours, that I sowed good seed in good ground, which in the providence of God produced in time good fruit."⁵

The Springfield newspapers were, of course, divided in their estimate of Clay's speech. The *Register*, smarting under the castigation, referred to the speaker as the "notorious" and "abolition missionary" of treasonable extremes. "Sentiments more atrocious," it said, "never found a place in the heart of the foulest traitor that ever meditated the destruction of his country."⁶

The *Illinois Journal*, edited by Lincoln's long-time friend, Simeon Francis, saw the occasion in a far different light. "Notwithstanding the busy time with our farmers, and the inconvenience to our citizens of attending a lecture some distance from the Square," it said, "we should think there was full fif-

teen hundred assembled yesterday in the grove near Mrs. Mather's residence, to hear the great speech of CASSIUS M. CLAY—for such it was—a GREAT HEROIC SPEECH. . . . He spoke BOLDLY, PROUDLY, his sentiments—in the face and eyes of all the contumely and insults thrown upon him. . . . C. M. CLAY has made several speeches in different parts of the State. We believe he has been, in every place, with the exception of this, respectfully treated.”⁷

With slavery now the paramount question in every state of the Union, Lincoln was convinced that the “parting of the ways” had come. There could be no more temporizing, no more compromising with the slave power. The extension into the territories must be resisted and prevented at all hazards, if the institution was not to become national. Douglas, fresh from his Kansas-Nebraska victory, with the applause of the South ringing in his ears, had returned to Illinois to defend his senatorial course among his constituents. But blood was on his hands. The murder of the Missouri Compromise must be avenged, and Abraham Lincoln put up his law books, laid aside his briefs, packed his old carpet satchel, and prepared to grapple with the slayer.

On October 3 Douglas spoke in the hall of the House of Representatives during the state fair in Springfield. Lincoln answered him from the same platform next day. Twelve days later they met again in joint debate at Peoria, and Lincoln's calm, dispassionate analysis of the situation on these two occasions made him the undisputed leader of the antislavery forces in the state of Illinois. Henceforth they looked to him for inspiration and guidance, and more and more he became absorbed in the attempt to solve the vital problem that was beginning to threaten the dissolution of the Union.

In December, Emilie Todd—“Little Sister”—came to Springfield for a lengthy visit with Mary and her other sisters, Elizabeth Edwards, Frances Wallace, and Ann Smith. Emilie—

eighteen years old, with her bright, regular features, peach-bloom complexion, slender figure, light brown hair, and dark, luminous eyes—was Robert Todd's most beautiful daughter and Mary's warm favorite of all her sisters and half sisters.

Springfield society was gay that winter, as it usually was when the legislature was in session—dinners, parties, balls, and, this time, hilarious sleigh riding in an especially deep snow. The Lincolns, however, for the first five weeks of the new year were extremely absorbed in the candidacy of "brother" Lincoln for the United States Senate. All the relatives were interested. Emilie sat with sister Elizabeth in the gallery of the statehouse on the afternoon of February 8, 1855, when Lincoln broke a deadlock between James Shields and himself by throwing his vote to Lyman Trumbull.

Seeing Mary every day, and Lincoln also, until he started on the circuit, she had an excellent opportunity to observe their reactions to defeat and to disappointment. Mary was tight-lipped for a little while—looked like she could say a lot if she would, but didn't. Lincoln was like the boy, whom he told about later when Douglas beat him, who had stubbed his toe: "Too hurt to laugh; too big to cry."⁸

"I regret my defeat moderately," he wrote Elihu B. Washburne, "but I am not nervous about it."⁹

To a client he apologized for a tardy acknowledgment. "When I received the bond, I was dabbling in politics; and, of course, neglecting business. Having since been beaten out, I have gone to work again."¹⁰

On evenings, especially when they were somewhat isolated by the heavy snow storms, Emilie and Lincoln and little Bob sat in front of an open fire while Mary read aloud from the works of Sir Walter Scott. It was a wonderful six months, fondly remembered by Emilie in extreme but sprightly old age, that she spent with the Lincolns in Springfield. They would have much—so tragically much—in common in those searing years of the future, now fortunately veiled from view.

They would sorely need all the warm affection and deep understanding which these months of close companionship had so greatly cultivated.¹¹ In June, Emilie came back home—the only one of Robert S. Todd's daughters ever to return unwed from north of the Ohio. Her heart was safe in old Kentucky, and in less than a year she would be married.

By the summer of 1855 the opposition newspapers were accusing Lincoln of "mousing about the libraries of the State House," which charge he made no effort to deny. Patiently, laboriously, he was digging citations from musty volumes, verifying facts, and delving deep into all the historical phases of the slavery question. It was about this time that Judge George Robertson of Lexington, counsel for Lincoln and the other Illinois heirs in their suit against Robert Wickliffe in the Fayette Circuit Court, visited Springfield. A former chief justice of the Kentucky Court of Appeals, he had also been a member of the Sixteenth Congress that had adopted the Missouri Compromise, and he lived to be the last survivor of that memorable session. He had just published a collection of his own speeches on slavery and other topics of public interest, entitled: *Scrap Book on Law and Politics, Men and Times*. Lincoln was out on the circuit when Robertson called at his office, but the Judge left a copy of the book for him with Herndon.

In a few days Lincoln returned home, and upon examination of the *Scrap Book* he was surprised to find that Congress had acted upon the question of the extension of slavery into the territories in 1819, more than a year prior to the passage of the Missouri Compromise measure. On December 16, 1818, Robertson had introduced a bill for the organization of the Territory of Arkansas; on February 18, 1819, Taylor of New York had proposed an amendment "that neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall be introduced into the said Territory," but after a warm discussion the amendment had been defeated by the bare margin of two votes. The youthful Rob-

ertson had defended his bill and opposed the amendment with the same zeal and eloquence that later made him one of the most celebrated lawyers of the Kentucky bar.

Congress, as long as it shall choose to legislate for any such Territory, may interdict the introduction of slavery as a domestic institution [admitted Robertson]. But I deny that such legislation by Congress would ever be necessary to the public welfare, or would, in any case, without the hearty concurrence of the slave states, be either just or prudent. . . . The citizens who shall cast their lots in Arkansas ought to decide for themselves whether slavery shall exist there or not, just as they would control all their other domestic institutions and social relations at home. Against their will, Congress ought not to force the establishment of slavery or any other domestic relation among them. Against their will, Congress ought not to prohibit slavery there. If Congress will legislate on slavery in the Territories, sound policy and distributive justice and equality would recommend that it draw a latitudinal line (say about 37 degrees North latitude) South of which slavery may exist but North of which it shall not.

[The young congressman had then closed with a lofty peroration.] And now, Mr. Chairman, allow me to say, that if the proposed restrictions be pertinaciously insisted on and maintained by the majority of Congress, that majority will heedlessly sow wind, and may, in time to come, woefully reap the whirlwind. They may, and I fear will, recklessly raise a storm that will scatter the seeds of discord over this favored land—Dragons' teeth, whose rank and pestilential crop, Upas-like, may poison the vital elements of this young, robust and promising Union, and finally, in the progress of desolation, may destroy its heart forever.¹²

The disclosures of Robertson's *Scrap Book* from a historical standpoint probably gave Lincoln some disquietude. In his Peoria speech of the previous October he had contended that Congress in 1787 by the adoption of the ordinance governing the Northwest had established "the policy of prohibiting slavery in new territory from which, except by mutual concession and compromise," it had not deviated for more than sixty years until the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. Yet here was a

definite and specific instance to the contrary—an occasion where Congress, without “mutual concession or compromise,” affirmed the doctrine of “Popular Sovereignty,” so tersely stated by the Kentucky congressman nearly forty years before Douglas had dragged it forth to public view as an expedient of his own. Perhaps it occurred to Lincoln that if Douglas took to “mousing about the libraries of the State House,” which, however, he never did, he might dig up this action of Congress on the Robertson resolution as a precedent.

And yet the action of Congress on the Arkansas resolution also afforded material for Lincoln’s side of the argument. Though this territory lay deep in slave latitude, 87 out of 176 members of the lower house had been in favor of restricting slavery from this area so exclusively southern. Those who defended the repeal of the Missouri Compromise were now contending that Congress had fixed the line of restriction in 1820 at 36° 30’ only as a matter “of mutual concession,” but Robertson’s speech showed that a year earlier the spokesman for the proslavery members, on a straight issue unclouded by efforts of compromise or collateral questions, had conceded the “sound policy and distributive justice” of approximately the line of the Missouri Compromise.

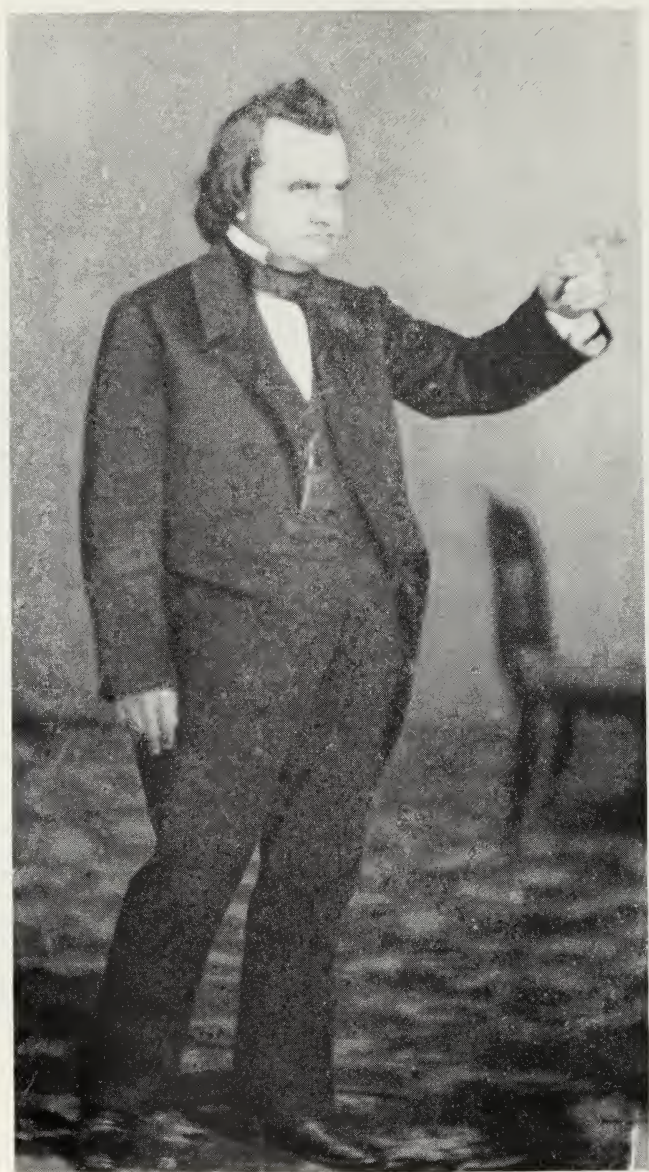
At any rate, on August 15, 1855, Lincoln wrote the Judge a long, earnest letter:

The volume you left for me has been received. I am really grateful for the honor of your kind remembrance, as well as for the book. The partial reading I have already given it, has afforded me much of both pleasure and instruction. It was new to me that the exact question which led to the Missouri compromise, had arisen before it arose in regard to Missouri; and that you had taken so prominent a part in it. Your short, but able and patriotic speech upon that occasion, has not been improved upon since, by those holding the same views; and, with all the lights you then had, the views you took appear to me as very reasonable.

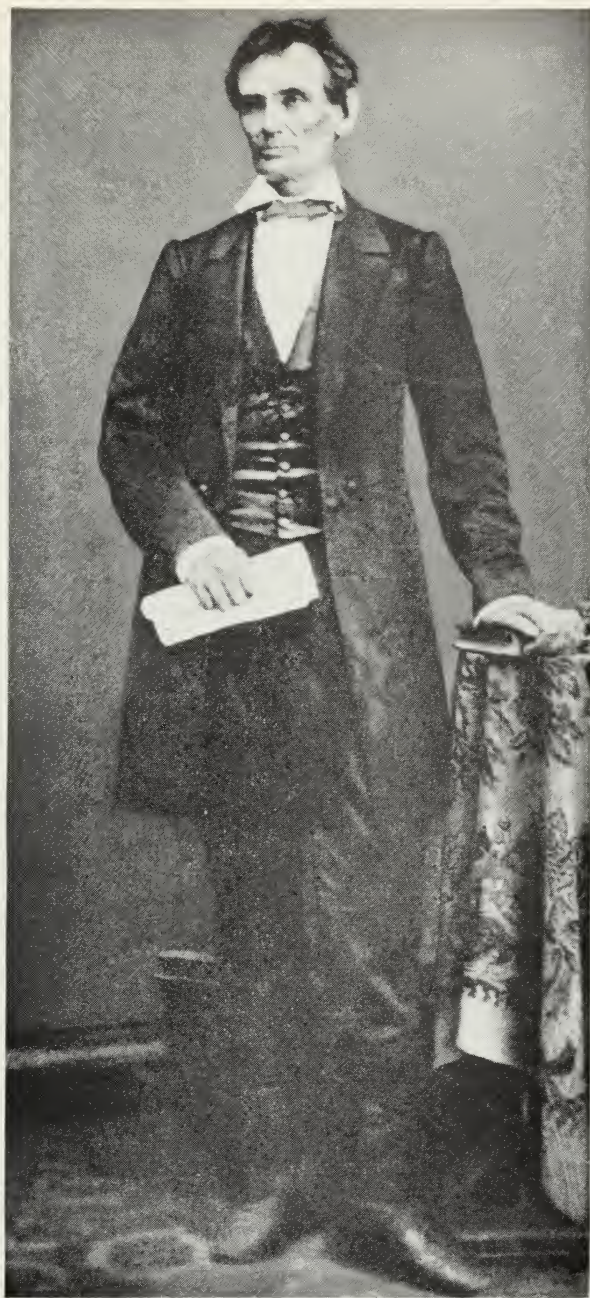
Lincoln then argued to Judge Robertson that the present situation was far different from what it was in 1819.



EMILIE TODD, AS SHE LOOKED WHEN SHE VISITED THE LINCOLNS
Original daguerreotype owned by the author



STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS, DEBATER. *Original
daguerreotype owned by Mrs. Zelda P. McKay*



ABRAHAM LINCOLN, ON THE HUSTINGS

- taste for politics & has taken much
interest, in the late contest,
which has resulted very much
as I expected, not hoped -
Altho' Mr. L. is, or was a Free
man, you must not include
him with so many of those,
who belong to that party, an
Abolitionist. In principle he
is far from it - All he desires
is, that slavery, shall not be
extended, let it remain, where
it is - My weak woman's heart
was too Southern in feeling, to
sympathise with any but
Fillmore, I have always been
a great admirer of his, he made
so good a President & is so
just a man & feels the necessity

MRS. LINCOLN'S LETTER TO EMILIE ABOUT HER HUSBAND'S
POLITICS. Original owned by author

You are not a friend to slavery in the abstract. In that speech you spoke of "*the peaceful extinction of slavery*" and used other expressions indicating your belief that the thing was, at some time, to have an end. Since then we have had thirty six years of experience; and this experience has demonstrated, I think, that there is no peaceful extinction of slavery in prospect for us. . . . So far as peaceful, voluntary emancipation is concerned, the condition of the negro slave in America, scarcely less terrible to the contemplation of a free mind, is now as fixed, and hopeless of change for the better, as that of the lost souls of the finally impenitent. . . . Our political problem now is "Can we, as a nation, continue together *permanently—forever—half slave, and half free?*" The problem is too mighty for me. May God, in his mercy, superintend the solution.¹³

In the concluding paragraph of this letter Lincoln wrote out for the first time the substance of his famous "House divided against itself" declaration which three years later brought him into national prominence.

During the succeeding months Lincoln finished reading Judge Robertson's *Scrap Book* and sadly watched the disintegration of the Whig party. He was devoted to every timber in the battered craft that had weathered so many heavy seas in bygone years. But the skillful hand of the veteran pilot, Henry Clay, was gone from the helm, and the grim, doughty skipper, Daniel Webster, trod the deck no more. Friendly winds no longer billowed her ragged, listless sails. Slowly, but surely, the old hulk was going down, with Lincoln clinging stubbornly to the wreck. "I think I am a whig," he wrote to another friend in Kentucky, "but others say there are no whigs, and that I am an abolitionist. When I was at Washington I voted for the Wilmot Proviso as good as forty times, and I never heard of any one attempting to unwhig me for that. I now do no more than oppose the *extension* of slavery."¹⁴

Meanwhile, Judge Robertson witnessed two events which vividly illustrated the grimmer aspects of that problem, the solution of which was "too mighty" for his friend Lincoln and upon which he had invoked divine aid and mercy.

The Pleasant Green Baptist Church was just down the street and one block over from Judge Robertson's mansion, "Rokeby Hall." This sheltered the religious congregation of the "quality" Negroes of Lexington—house servants of many of the town's prominent citizens. Their pastor—pious, eloquent, thirty-two-year-old George DuPuy—belonged to the Lewis Craig estate, which had been long in process of settlement.

One morning a committee of elders and deacons from Pleasant Green in deep distress came to the home of the Reverend Mr. Pratt, pastor of the First Baptist Church, widely known champion and friend of their race. The executor of the Craig estate, so they informed Pratt, had just notified George that it had been decided to include him in the list of slaves to be sold for the southern market the next morning at auction on Cheap-side; DuPuy was young, strong, and intelligent, and bidding on him would be brisk. If Brother Pratt and the white folks of his church would save their preacher, Pleasant Green would gratefully "pay them back" in church collections.

That evening in Squire Graves' office at the courthouse Pratt and four of his deacons met the executor, who was at first inclined to do some sharp trading. "Mr. Taylor considered Preacher DuPuy a favorable piece of property—said he had been told the Negro was worth \$1,000. We told him," said Pratt, "we were not willing to give over \$800." Taylor refused the offer, and the conference adjourned. The Pleasant Green congregation spent an anxious night. Next morning negotiations were resumed. Taylor "dropped \$100"—said he would not take less. Pratt stuck by his original offer. The auction started. Then, just before the auctioneer reached DuPuy, Taylor yielded to entreaty and "agreed to let him be struck off" at \$800. Having become the property of the First Baptist Church, Pastor DuPuy was turned over to his own overjoyed congregation, to remain, however, a slave, since Negroes freed after the enactment of a recent statute were no longer permitted to reside in Kentucky. Pratt recalled in his diary that every Sunday

morning a committee from Pleasant Green—ever grateful over their pastor's narrow escape from the "Nigger trader"—came regularly to his home with the Sunday offering of pennies, nickels, and dimes until the entire debt was paid.¹⁵

The other event observed by Judge Robertson involved his own profession and the court over which he presided as chief justice for many years. Steve Kyler was "a free man of color" liberated before the enactment of the 1849 constitution. His former master, Joseph Kyler, had allowed him to hire himself out until he had earned enough money to purchase his freedom. Joseph Kyler also owned Steve's wife Cynthia. The thrifty and industrious Steve finally saved enough money to obtain her freedom also, and he and her owner went to a lawyer to have the papers of manumission made out. The attorney informed them that "under the existing Constitution of Kentucky, Cynthia could not be emancipated and remain in the state." Since she and Steve were happily married and wanted to live together, Joseph Kyler upon advice of counsel executed a bill of sale conveying Cynthia to her husband.

At peace in their own neat cabin, Steve and Cynthia were for a time prosperous. After a while, however, Steve fell into debt, and two suits against him went to judgment. Then one morning, to the great consternation of this little household, a constable appeared, seized Cynthia, and carried her off to satisfy her husband's creditors.

Steve hurried to his lawyer, Allen Burton, later Lincoln's minister to Colombia, who obtained an injunction which prevented Cynthia from being sold until the court could decide whether she was a wife or a chattel. The case came on for hearing in the circuit court, and the trial judge promptly decided against Steve and Cynthia and entered an order of sale, which, however, was stayed until Burton's appeal could be taken to the Court of Appeals at Frankfort.

For the creditors, George R. McKee, whose brother Lincoln would appoint consul to Panama, stoutly maintained that Cyn-

thia's master "did no act by which she would at any future time, be entitled to freedom." She was "sold as a slave; in the hands of a purchaser she was liable to sale for his debts. It is a fraud on the creditors," declared lawyer McKee, for Steve Kyler "to claim" Cynthia "as a wife."

"What!" replied Burton, "a fraud for a man not to make his wife a slave? Can the forbearance to do such an act be tortured into a fraud upon the right of anyone, much less upon the rights of a creditor who did not trust him on the faith of her being his property *but whose debt was created while she belonged to another man?*"

"If this be so," said Burton, "we are of a certainty realizing, in the severest practical form, one of the effects of the barbarous and piratical doctrine of the Dred Scott decision that 'negroes have no rights that we are bound to respect.' Truly, then, has that African Adam, in his attempt at the forbidden fruit of freedom, brought worse than sin and death to the negro race." Burton further asserted that, "under existing law, the court was bound to decide that, in Kentucky, a free negro can acquire no property in a slave"; that the proof showed that at the time Joseph Kyler gave the bill of sale for Cynthia it was the understanding and agreement between all the parties that he should take her as a wife only; and that therefore "he acquired no property in her aside from her comfort and society."

Justice Zachariah Wheat delivered the opinion of the court. "We do not deem it necessary," he said, "to examine or comment upon all of the grounds assumed by counsel for Steve and Cynthia." The claim for exemption from debt "mentioned in the executions levied upon Cynthia, must turn upon the effect of the deed from Joseph Kyler to Steve." This deed was "an absolute one on its face, and passed the title in Cynthia to Steve and by the laws of Kentucky slaves are subject to execution for the debts of the owner just as any other personal property is subject."

"Marriages between slaves have no legal effect," said Judge Wheat, "and marriages between free negroes and slaves are not

recognized except to a very limited extent. Upon an exhaustive examination of the record," concluded the learned jurist, "we have been unable to perceive any error to the prejudice of appellants, wherefore the judgment of the Circuit Court is affirmed."¹⁶

On May 29, 1856, the Republican party in Illinois came into existence at the Bloomington state convention, and Lincoln, cutting loose his old moorings, made his famous "Lost Speech" which so captivated the audience that the reporters forgot to take it down.

In June the national Republican convention at Philadelphia that nominated John C. Frémont for President gave Lincoln 110 votes for Vice-President. With his political affiliation now firmly established, Lincoln vigorously canvassed the state for Frémont until James Buchanan on the Democratic ticket defeated both the Republican candidate and Millard Fillmore, nominee of the Know-Nothing party, at the polls in November.

Soon after the election Mary Lincoln wrote "Little Sister" Emilie, who recently had married Ben Hardin Helm of Elizabethtown, son of former governor John L. Helm, president of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad. Young Helm had resigned from the army a few years after his graduation from West Point, had studied law at Harvard, returned to Kentucky, and entered politics, and had just been elected commonwealth's attorney for his judicial district.

Mary's letter dated November 23, 1856, thanked Emilie for her recent letter. She was always glad to hear from her even if she did not reply promptly. "So, remember dear E.—when you desire to be particularly acceptable, sit thee down & write me one of your agreeable missives & do not wait for a return of each, from a staid matron & moreover the mother of three noisy boys." Mary referred to the fact that Emilie's husband, "like some of the rest of us, has a great taste for politics," and spoke of the "late contest" which resulted much as she had "expected, not hoped."

"Although Mr. L. is, or was, a *Fremont* man," she explained, "you must not include him with so many of those who belong to that party, an *Abolitionist*. In principle he is far from it. All he desires is that slavery shall not be extended, let it remain where it is. My weak woman's heart was too Southern in feeling to sympathize with any but Fillmore. I have always been his great admirer; he made so good a President & is so just a man & feels the *necessity* of keeping foreigners within bounds."

Then, without premonition as to who the presidential candidates of 1860 would be, Mary told Emilie: "If some of your Kentuckians had to deal with the 'wild Irish' as we housekeepers are sometimes called upon to do, the South would certainly elect Mr. Fillmore next time."

All the relatives in Springfield were well. She was "very sorry to hear that our mother is so frequently indisposed" and hoped "she has recovered from her lameness."

After relating all the social news which would be of interest to Emilie, Mary concluded: "If you do not bring yourself & husband to see us very soon, we will think you are not as proud of him as rumor says you should be."¹⁷

Nearly three months later Mary wrote Emilie again. Springfield society was in a whirl. "Within the last 3 weeks, there has been a party almost every night & some two or three grand fetes are coming off this week. I may perhaps surprise you, when I mention that I am recovering from the slight fatigue of a very large & I really believe a very handsome & agreeable entertainment, at least our friends flatter us by saying so."

She told Emilie that she thought of her frequently the other evening at Governor Bissell's party, when she saw "so many of your acquaintances, beautifully dressed & dancing away very happily." Lots of inquiries were made about her "by both Beaux & Belles." Mary hoped that next winter her half sister Elodie, whom she called "Dedee," and Kitty, another half sister, would visit her—"we will endeavor to make it as pleasant as possible for them."¹⁸

In another letter, dated September 20, 1857, Mary wrote Emilie that she was very anxious to hear from her. She said

that Lincoln had heard from a friend in Chicago "gentle insinuations" which made her think that by now Emilie was "a happy, laughing, loving mama."

A portion of the summer had been spent by the Lincolns "most pleasantly in travelling East; we visited Niagara, Canada, New York & other points of interest. When I saw the large steamers at the New York landing, ready for their European voyage, I felt in my heart inclined to sigh, that poverty was my portion, how I long to go to Europe. I often laugh & tell Mr. L. that I am determined my next husband shall be rich."

Then she gave Emilie an account of the doings of relatives and closed, "when you read this, like a good sister, sit down & write me a good long letter, all about yourself. Mr. L. is not at home, this makes the fourth week he has been in Chicago."¹⁹

When the senatorial campaign of 1858 rolled around, Lincoln's reputation was no longer bounded by the borders of Illinois. It had passed beyond the Ohio and Mississippi on the south and west and was spreading rapidly eastward over the Alleghenies. Senator Douglas was, of course, the overwhelming choice of the Illinois Democrats for re-election, and it was inevitable that Lincoln should be his opponent.

On June 16, 1858, the state Republican convention met at Springfield and resolved by acclamation that "Abraham Lincoln is the first and only choice of the Republicans of Illinois for the United States Senate as the successor of Stephen A. Douglas." Accepting the nomination, Lincoln reiterated the matured conviction which he had expressed three years before to Judge Robertson of Lexington: "'A house divided against itself cannot stand,'" he solemnly announced. "I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half *slave* and half *free*. I do not expect the Union to be *dissolved*—I do not expect the house to *fall*—but I *do* expect it will cease to be divided. It will become *all* one thing, or *all* the other."²⁰ The memorable battle was on, and Lincoln had started on his tortuous, tragic road to martyrdom.

The fortunes of the two political adversaries had run a

strange parallel and were destined to continue so to the very end. Both were born in poverty: Douglas, in Vermont; Lincoln, in Kentucky. Douglas in his youth was a cabinetmaker; Lincoln, a rail splitter. Both were members of the Illinois legislature in 1836. They had been admitted to the bar of the state supreme court in the same year; they had been rivals for the hand of the vivacious Mary Todd. In 1847 both were members of Congress—Douglass in the Senate, Lincoln in the House of Representatives—and now they were opposing candidates for the highest office within the gift of the state.

Yet they were as different in every possible way as two men could be. Douglas was five feet four inches in height, stockily built, with broad shoulders, deep chest, massive head, and strongly marked features. Sturdy, graceful, resourceful, fearless, he was known to thousands by the admiring sobriquet of "Little Giant," and the title fitted him well. A man of tireless energy, a debater of singular skill, a master of subtle sophistry, Douglas was now the most widely known and heartily feared stump speaker in public life.

Lincoln stood six feet four inches in his shoes. He was lean of flesh, ungainly in physique, and awkward in movement. His power as a public speaker lay in fairness of statement, quaint originality and aptness of phrase, earnestness which on occasion rose to the heights of classic eloquence, a keen, slashing logic that cut to the very heart of a proposition, and an unfailing good humor which put the irritable Douglas to disadvantage more than once during the canvass.

The campaign had hardly started when the Douglas newspapers began to charge Lincoln with violating the ethics of the stump by following their candidate and taking advantage of his crowds. The *Chicago Times* on July 30 complained:

Abe Lincoln, the candidate of all the Republicans, wants an audience. He came to Chicago and declared it impossible for him to get the people to turn out to hear him and then it was resolved to try and get him a chance to speak to the crowds drawn up to meet and welcome Douglas. That proposition was partially de-

clined and another substituted; but yet the cringing, crawling creature is hanging at the outskirts of Douglas meetings, begging the people to come and hear him. . . . He went yesterday to Monticello in Douglas' train; poor desperate creature, he wants an audience; poor, unhappy mortal, the people won't turn out to hear him and he must do something, even if that something is mean, sneaking and disreputable.

The evident purpose of these attacks was to ridicule Lincoln off the hustings. Undoubtedly Douglas appeared to better advantage when his tall, lank opponent was not present. But Lincoln's only reply to the venomous tirade of his enemies was a point-blank challenge to joint debate which he had sent to Douglas on July 24. To this communication Douglas responded on the same day in a long, peevish letter. He declined to make a joint canvass of the entire state, but grudgingly consented to meet Lincoln at places which he designated in seven congressional districts. Lincoln closed the negotiations on July 31 by accepting these terms, although he pointed out that Douglas took four openings and closings to his three.

The announcement of the joint discussion created much excitement in Illinois and aroused widespread interest throughout the country. The partisans of Douglas greeted the news joyously, and his newspapers described at great length the fine spectacle of the "Little Giant chawing up old Abe" which was in store for the public. Many of Lincoln's friends were filled with forebodings, so great was the fame of his adversary.

I had thought until recently that the Little Giant was dead in Illinois until I saw the speech of Mr. Lincoln made to the Republican convention in Springfield [wrote a resident of Bloomington to Senator Crittenden of Kentucky]. You have I suppose seen it, "*A house divided against itself cannot stand, the Union must be all Slave or all free.*" . . . I do not believe that there is any Western state that can upon a fair canvass be brought to endure the sentiments of that Springfield speech. It is abolition and disunion so absolutely expressed that it should be made to burn Mr. Lincoln as long as he lives. No skillful dodging should ever be allowed to

shield him. The Little Giant will I trust brand it upon him in every county in the state and you may expect to hear of such a canvass in Illinois as will equal in excitement and interest the battles of the giants in the days of yore.²¹

However, the Little Giant himself had no illusions about his old rival. He knew right well the nature of the task before him. He was not unmindful of other occasions when his plausible sophistry had been impaled upon the keen point of Lincoln's inexorable logic. "Of all the damned Whig rascals about Springfield," remarked Douglas, "Abe Lincoln is the ablest and honestest."

From the *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, which still came regularly to the Lincoln home, it was painfully apparent that the old Whigs of the South were almost unanimously for the Democratic candidate. When the challenge to Douglas appeared in the Kentucky newspaper, Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia, later vice-president of the Confederacy, was spending his vacation in Lexington. He and Lincoln had been friends and stanch political allies in the Thirtieth Congress, and on February 2, 1848, Lincoln had written Herndon, his law partner, "I just take up my pen to say, that Mr. Stephens of Georgia, a little, slim, pale-faced, consumptive man, with a voice like Logan's has just concluded the very best speech, of an hour's length, I ever heard. My old, withered, dry eyes, are full of tears yet."²²

For years Stephens had been one of the bulwarks of the Whig party in the South, but now he emphatically informed the *Observer* that he was "in favor of the reelection to the Senate of Judge Douglas."²³ And the once rock-ribbed Whig editor himself exclaimed, "Can any of our Democratic contemporaries explain to us why it is that the President and his special organs oppose the reelection of Douglas to the Senate? He has no opponent but Abe Lincoln, who is an out and out Black Republican. Does the Administration desire the success of Lincoln over Douglas?"²⁴

Between August 21 and October 15, 1858, Lincoln and

Douglas met at Ottawa, Freeport, Jonesboro, Charleston, Galesburg, Quincy, and Alton in the most stirring and important series of political discussions ever held in the United States. It was at Freeport that Douglas made his fatal answer to a question propounded to him by Lincoln, which, although it won him the senatorship, lost him the Presidency two years later.

The northern and southern Democrats were in accord on the proposition that Congress had no control over slavery in the territories. They were divided, however, on the right of the citizens of these territories to exclude the institution prior to admission as a state. And into this crevice in the timbers of the Democratic party Lincoln drove a wedge with all the force and skill of his rail-splitting days. The question that he framed was: "Can the people of the United States Territory in any lawful way, against the wish of any citizen of the United States, exclude slavery from its limits prior to the formation of a state constitution?"

Just before the debate Lincoln consulted several friends as to the advisability of asking Douglas this question. All were strongly against it, saying that the Little Giant was sure to answer in the affirmative and thus secure his re-election, this view of the question being the popular one in Illinois. Lincoln replied that such an answer from Douglas was exactly what he wanted, inasmuch as his main object was to make it impossible for him to obtain the votes of the southern states at the next presidential election. "The battle of 1860 is worth a hundred of this," he said.²⁵

And when Lincoln at Freeport put the question, Douglas with much bombast and assurance answered it in the affirmative. Of course the people of the territory could keep slavery out by what he termed "police or unfriendly legislation." The answer was hailed with delight and applause by the Illinois Democrats, but as Lincoln had prophesied, the South was lost to Douglas forever.²⁶

Through the columns of the Lexington newspaper Lincoln

saw an accurate and immediate reflection of southern opinion on Douglas' answer. "There is precious little difference between these gentlemen, so far as the present aspect of the slavery question is concerned," said the *Observer*. "The only difference we can see between the positions of Mr. Lincoln and Judge Douglas is that, while the former acknowledges himself a free-soiler and declares his opposition to any further extension of slavery, the latter claims to be a Democrat, but avows himself in favor of principles, the inevitable tendency of which is to exclude slavery from every foot of Territory possessed by the Government. . . . The present contest in Illinois and the disclosures it has made ought to be sufficient to teach the South a lesson in regard to hypocritical professions."²⁷

Throughout the joint canvass Judge Douglas sought to create the impression that Lincoln was in favor of Negro equality. "I do not question Mr. Lincoln's conscientious belief that the negro was made his equal and hence his brother," said the Judge, "but for my own part, I do not regard the negro my equal, and positively deny that he is my brother, or any kin to me whatever." Lincoln, however, defended himself on this point in clear and convincing language:

Anything that argues me into his idea of perfect social and political equality with the negro, is but a specious and fantastic arrangement of words, by which a man can prove a horse chestnut to be a chestnut horse. . . . I have no purpose to introduce political and social equality between the white and the black races. There is a physical difference between the two, which in my judgment will probably forever forbid their living together upon the footing of perfect equality, and inasmuch as it becomes a necessity that there must be a difference, I, as well as Judge Douglas, am in favor of the race to which I belong, having the superior position. I have never said anything to the contrary, but I hold that notwithstanding all this, there is no reason in the world why the negro is not entitled to all the natural rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence, the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. I hold that he is as much entitled to these as the white man. I agree with Judge Douglas he is not my equal in many re-

spects—certainly not in color, perhaps not in moral or intellectual endowment. But in the right to eat the bread, without leave of anybody else, which his own hand earns, *he is my equal and the equal of Judge Douglas, and the equal of every living man.*²⁸

The setting of the encounter at Charleston, although quite typical of all the others, was perhaps the most elaborate. On the evening before the debate the little town was in holiday attire, with its public buildings and streets decorated with flags and banners, while the hotels were crowded to overflowing with visitors. Both Lincoln and Douglass spent the night at Mattoon, ten miles away, from which they were escorted next morning by parallel roads to Charleston. Douglas was immensely popular in this section of the state, which was strongly Democratic, while Lincoln, whose aged stepmother lived a few miles out of town, also had many stanch friends.

The Lincoln procession was led by a brass band from Indiana. A large wagon following his carriage was filled with thirty-one young ladies, each representing a state, and bore the following motto:

Westward the Star of Empire takes its way,
Thy girls Link-on to Lincoln,
Their mothers were for Clay.

Riding alone behind the wagon was a girl on horseback, representing Kansas, with a banner inscribed: "Kansas will be free." Another banner read: "Support Abraham Lincoln, the defender of Henry Clay."

On the outskirts of Charleston a large enthusiastic crowd met the procession and escorted the dusty cavalcade to the Capitol Hotel. A huge banner stretched across the street from the hotel to the courthouse bore a sketch of an emigrant wagon and two yoke of oxen driven by a tall youth, with the inscription at the top: "Abe's entrance into Charleston thirty years ago." On another large piece of canvas a diminutive Lincoln smote a mighty Douglas with a club—the Little Giant was helpless before the savage onslaught of "Abe, the Giant Killer."

In front of the hotel the reception ceremony took place in what the Lincoln newspapers described as "the finest and most impressive style." The chairman made a neat speech of welcome, to which "Mr. Lincoln responded in a few remarks, well timed and to the point."

The Douglas procession was even more imposing. It consisted of large delegations from different counties, headed by thirty-two young women on horseback, each carrying the national colors. On reaching Charleston, the procession, two and a half miles long, marched proudly under a banner inscribed "Welcome, Douglas," and another with a caricature of a white man with a Negro woman and a mulatto boy standing beside him, inscribed beneath, "Negro Equality." Douglas was carried in triumph to his hotel, where a reception committee met him with warm greetings.²⁹

At half past two o'clock the speaking began at the fair grounds, three quarters of a mile west of town. Here before an immense throng Lincoln denounced the Kansas-Nebraska Bill and the conspiracy to extend slavery into the territories. He reiterated his views on slavery and his denial that he favored Negro equality. He repeated that he was not, and had never been, in favor of "bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races, . . . nor . . . of making voters or jurors of negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people." He closed this part of his speech by saying, "I do not perceive that because the white man is to have the superior position the negro should be denied everything. I do not understand that because I do not want a negro woman for a slave I must necessarily want her for a wife. My understanding is that I can just let her alone."³⁰

After the Freeport debate, where Douglas announced his fatal theory of "unfriendly" legislation against slavery in the territories, the Lexington newspapers viewed the campaign in Illinois with detached interest. They continued, however, to publish rather extensive accounts of the joint canvass. On

October 9 the *Observer* said that a recent visitor to Illinois reported: "There is no comparison between Douglas and Lincoln as debaters—the former being far superior to the latter. The Republicans however," added the *Observer*, "are as well satisfied with their candidate as the Democrats with theirs and the full vote of both parties will be polled." Now and then both the *Observer* and the *Statesman* referred in humorous vein to "Mr. Lincoln's broadsword exploit with General Shields."

On the day of the last joint debate at Alton, Gustave Koerner, now practicing law at Belleville, Illinois, arrived early in the morning and found Lincoln in the hotel sitting room. "He at once said," related Koerner in his *Memoirs* "'Let us go up and see Mary.' I had not seen Mrs. Lincoln, that I recollected, since meeting her at the Lexington parties when she was Miss Todd. 'Now tell Mary what you think of our chances. She is rather dispirited.' I was certain, I said, of our carrying the state and tolerably certain of carrying the Legislature."³¹

The speaking began at two o'clock on the public square. Douglas' voice was scarcely audible. Hoarse, irritated, baffled, worn out, he was not the suave, patronizing Little Giant who had faced the vast audience at Ottawa with careless and audacious mien. On the other hand, the high-pitched voice of Lincoln had suffered little from the seven debates and the long campaign. Lean, inured to physical hardships, and of abstemious habits, he had stood the grueling contest far better than his portly, pleasure-loving opponent. That his good humor had not deserted him is also indicated by the fact that as Douglas concluded his remarks, Lincoln handed his old linen duster to a young lady with whom he had been engaged in conversation, saying in his droll way, "Now hold my coat, while I stone Stephen."

At the close of the joint discussions, after short individual speeches in a few crucial areas, Lincoln returned to Springfield to await the election. He had met the ablest gladiator in the political arena and, against many odds, had more than held his own. Wealth and influence had opposed him. He had

traveled over the state in day coaches and on freight trains, while Douglas was escorted by the vice-president of the Illinois Central in the directors' car attached to a gaily decorated special train that carried a brass cannon which fired salutes at the various stopping places.

Though the debates were over, the battle furiously continued as election day approached. The Democrats were as resourceful as they were "unterrified," and now they suddenly unmasked a battery which raked the Republicans from an unexpected quarter. Letters endorsing Douglas over Lincoln from three of Mary Todd's earliest friends back home—John J. Crittenden, United States senator; John C. Breckinridge, Vice-President; and James B. Clay, son of Henry Clay, congressman from the Lexington district—were circulated from the stump and through the press.

All through the campaign Lincoln had made effective use of Douglas' estrangement from the administration at Washington. He himself had been looked upon as the defender of Henry Clay and his principles, and had vigorously contended that the Whigs utterly condemned the policies of his opponent. In this way thousands of voters had been alienated from Douglas and the Whigs kept in line.

Now overnight the situation changed. The Democratic organs loudly proclaimed the intense yearning of the administration for the re-election of Douglas and published Breckinridge's letter as proof of the fact. They ridiculed the claim that Douglas was hostile to the great policies of Henry Clay and pointed to the communication from his own son. They condemned in glaring headlines the "Lincoln lies" that the majority of Lincoln's old party would support him against the Little Giant and cited Senator Crittenden as a conspicuous example of the Whig defection to Douglas. "While Lincoln and his black republican associates are appealing to old whigs, and to whig memories," said the *Illinois State Register*, "to sustain and forward the interests of a 'contemptible abolition party' of to-day, the great living representative of Clay and of

his party is lavish in his commendation of Mr. Douglas, whom Lincoln would supplant.”³²

This sudden and adroit onset of the Democrats threw the Republicans into “spasmodic convulsions.” Lincoln was apparently the only person who had foreseen the possibility of intervention from Kentucky, and he had tried his utmost to forestall it. Early in July he had written Senator Crittenden asking him to take no part in the approaching campaign which would offend his friends in Illinois. “Nor am I fishing for a letter on the other side,” he said, “even if such could be had, my judgment is that you would better be hands off!”³³

Crittenden had promptly replied. He called attention to the fact that he and Douglas in the last session of Congress had acted together in opposing certain administration measures; had my warm approbation and sympathy—and, when it was understood, that, for the very course of conduct, in which I had that the position which Douglas took was full of sacrifice, yet he defended it “*like a man*.” “For this,” said Crittenden, “he concurred & participated, the angry power of the Administration & its party was to be employed to defeat his re-election to the Senate, . . . I could not but wish for his success—and his triumph over such a persecution. . . . I must confess that I still entertain [these sentiments], & what ever I do, must correspond with them.” But he added that his position “most certainly, did not include a single particle of personal unkindness or opposition” to the Whig candidate.³⁴ Keenly disappointed at Crittenden’s attitude, Lincoln showed this letter to no other person except Herndon, but in spite of their efforts at secrecy, the news leaked out that he had received some sort of communication from the Kentucky senator.³⁵

Taken by surprise and on the spur of the moment the *Illinois State Journal* blunderingly denounced Crittenden’s endorsement of Judge Douglas as a “forgery . . . concealed from the people until just before the election and when it is too late for Mr. Crittenden to expose it.” To make matters worse, the *Journal* announced that Crittenden had written a letter to a prominent citizen in Springfield in which he expressed “him-

self heartily in favor of the triumph of the united opposition against Douglas, and bids them God speed in the good work." The *Register* promptly charged that the "prominent citizen" alluded to was none other than Lincoln himself. "Who will believe that if such letter shows Mr. Crittenden 'heartily in favor of the united opposition against Douglas,' that the *Journal* would not have long since paraded it! On the contrary, that letter expresses no such thing, but gives Mr. Abraham Lincoln a cold bath. . . . Will Mr. Lincoln, through the *Journal*, trot out that letter?"

Pressing their advantage, the Democrats immediately telegraphed Crittenden asking him whether, as stated by the *Journal*, he had written a letter endorsing Lincoln, and the Kentucky senator wired back: "I have written no such letter." Thus caught in a precarious situation, Lincoln and the *Journal* were shelled with heavy guns by the *Register* and other Douglas newspapers.

We have no doubt the *Journal* editors . . . really think there is a cleverness, a "smartness," in the petty larceny tactics which they practice [exclaimed the wrathful *Register*], but what can be thought by honest men of Abraham Lincoln, who aspires to a seat in the United States Senate, winking at such an imposition, sought to be put upon the public for his benefit, when he had in his pocket the letter from Mr. Crittenden giving the lie to the utterings of his organ, issued under his nose! . . . Was there ever so base, so groveling, an effort by a man seeking high position, and asking the suffrages of the people? Forgery! Was there ever a more contemptible forgery or fraud than this effort—this despairing, drowning effort of Abraham Lincoln, abolition candidate for Senator?³⁶

While the controversy went fiercely on, Republicans completed preparations for their closing rally at Springfield. Saturday, October 30, dawned clear after a week of steady rain. The stores and public buildings in the vicinity of the statehouse were jauntily arrayed in gay bunting and flags that fluttered in the autumn breeze. By ten o'clock the county delegates began to arrive in mud-bespattered vehicles. About noon a train of nine cars arrived from Jacksonville and other inter-

mediate points, followed soon afterward by a double-header of thirty-two cars over the Chicago & Alton, festooned with banners, decorated with busts of Lincoln and Henry Clay, and inscribed: "Abe Lincoln, our next Senator"; "A. Lincoln, the Pride of Illinois."

At two o'clock Lincoln earnestly but rather wearily addressed the vast audience packed about the speaker's stand on the east side of the public square. "Today," he said, "closes the discussions of this canvass." The planting being over, nothing remained but the harvest. He dwelt upon the fact that resistance to the extension of slavery had been his sole object.

As I have not felt, so I have not expressed any harsh sentiment toward our Southern bretheren. I have constantly declared, as I really believed, the only difference between them and us, is the difference of circumstances. . . . In some respects the contest has been painful to me. Myself, and those with whom I act have been constantly accused of a purpose to destroy the union; and bespattered with every imaginable odious epithet; and some who were friends, as it were but yesterday, have made themselves most active in this. I have cultivated patience, and made no attempt at a retort.³⁷

During the speech a well-dressed man mounted on a proud horse rode up close to the stand. "How would you like to sleep with a nigger?" he yelled to Lincoln, who stopped and looked at his questioner with an expression of pity on his gaunt, worn features. Before he could reply, however, a gnarled, grizzled prairie farmer took a huge soggy chew of tobacco from his mouth and flung the reeking "quid" full into the horseman's face, and Lincoln resumed his address as though nothing had happened.³⁸ A few minutes later he closed his remarks in the midst of tremendous applause and waving handkerchiefs and banners.

On November 2, in a heavy downpour of rain, the state of Illinois waded through slop and mud to the polls. Within forty-eight hours Lincoln knew that he was beaten. He had won the popular vote, but lost the legislature that chose the senator. And on all sides the Republicans vociferously pro-

claimed one important cause of their leader's defeat. "Thousands of Whigs dropped us just on the eve of the election, through the influence of Crittenden," wrote Lincoln's law partner to a friend in the East.³⁹ "Senator Crittenden is entitled to the credit of defeating Mr. Lincoln," said the *Chicago Daily Democrat*, denouncing the senator and John C. Breckinridge in strong terms. "Thus was Lincoln slain in Old Kentucky."⁴⁰

The loss of the election was a bitter blow to the Lincolns—to Mary no less than to Lincoln himself. The conviction that the friends of her girlhood had contributed largely to this defeat did not soothe her feelings. Especially was this so as to Crittenden—her father's lifelong associate, the best man at his wedding—whose merry banter with old Nelson as he mixed the juleps in the Todd library at Lexington lingered vividly in her memory. Crittenden, the man of whom Lincoln himself said, "I have always loved with an affection as tender and as endearing as I have loved any man,"⁴¹ had gone out of his way to deal her husband a mortal blow.

Although Mary doubtless spoke her mind about it all frequently and with caustic emphasis, Lincoln bore his defeat calmly and without complaint. But it sank deeply into his heart none the less. Alone in the dimly lighted, uncarpeted law office he lay on the dilapidated sofa, gazing gloomily through dust-stained windows out over the stable roofs and cluttered back yards. On the long pine table scarred by many a jackknife he wrote a brief letter to Senator Crittenden: "The emotions of defeat, at the close of a struggle in which I felt more than a merely selfish interest, and to which defeat the use of your name contributed largely, are fresh upon me; but, even in this mood, I can not for a moment suspect you of anything dishonorable."⁴² To a friend tried and true he also wrote, "I am glad I made the late race. It gave me a hearing on the great and durable question of the age, which I could have had in no other way; and though I now sink out of view, and shall be forgotten, I believe I have made some marks which will tell for the cause of civil liberty long after I am gone."⁴³

Rebellion

NOW THAT the election was over, Lincoln went back to his law practice, so long neglected for politics. The old calendar of the United States District Court shows him filing pleadings, arguing motions, taking judgments, and trying cases. Frequently he won and again he lost, but he was busy.

He was still in touch with friends and relatives in the Bluegrass. Deferred payments on certain real estate which he had sold for Robert S. Todd's sister, Maria Bullock, were coming in slowly, and early in January, Lincoln wrote her about them:

Springfield, Ills.
Jan. 3, 1859

Dear Aunt

I have recently had two letters from our cousin Charles Carr, in relation to your business. It annoys me to have to say that I can not collect money now. I now believe the quickest way I can get your money is for me to buy the debts of you, as soon as I can get in any money of my own to do it with. I keep some money loaned at ten per cent; and when I can get hold of some, it would be a ready investment for me to just take these debts off your hands;

and I shall try to do so. I think it will be better all round than to resort to the law. This does not apply to the small debt of eighty odd dollars, upon which I shall sue and foreclose the mortgage next court. All well.

Yours as ever,

A. Lincoln¹

Money out at 10 per cent was not bad business. It was Lincoln's policy to "keep some" lent at that rate of interest. Yet, in order that Aunt Maria should not be delayed in her collections by litigation, Lincoln proposed to call in his own investments yielding 10 per cent and purchase the Bullock notes bearing only 6.

Through the winter Lincoln remain absorbed in private affairs, but it was soon evident that the public had not forgotten him. By early spring, 1859, friends were urging his availability as the next nominee of the Republican party for President of the United States, but to this flattering proposal Lincoln modestly replied: "I do not think myself fit for the Presidency."² His interest, however, in the "great and durable question of the age" had not abated, and he had followed with deepest sympathy the bloody attempt to exclude slavery from Kansas.

One morning Billy Herndon brought the following letter to Lincoln's desk.

Paris Hotel
G. Talbutt, Proprietor

General Stage Office
Paris, Kentucky
Sept. 7, 1859

Hon. A. Lincoln

Sir I hope you are well and Family I am in good helth but lean recovering from Cough. I wish you to collect If you can 50 Dollars of the President of the Agriculteral Fare at Chigauger [Chicago] Tillman for my sirvesses by contrack at the Agricl Fare at Richmond Virgina Last fall The Pensilvany and baltimore fare Maryl Promptly paid ther premium I spent 20 dollars to go to Richmond Ag Fare and He did not pay the contrack He is a bad man sure if you can collect it you may take half of the monie for pay it is not Twelve monts yet sens it was due I hope you

remember me and will do all you can to collect it you will favour
me with answer and oblige yours

Denton Offutt

Gen. Tilmann Detor to Denton Offutt for performance on horse
Fifty Dollars 50\$

Oct 1858

Richmond, Vir.³

General Tench Tilghman of Oxford, Maryland, was president of the United States Agricultural Society. The Richmond fair was the sixth annual meeting of the society, and Offutt knew that Tilghman would attend the next meeting in Chicago.

Offutt had just returned from England, broken in health, despite his assurance to the contrary, and bitter in spirit from his failure to unseat a horse-taming rival, John S. Rarey, in the lofty esteem of the British people.

Rarey, a native of Ohio, some thirty years younger than Offutt, had achieved considerable local acclaim during the past decade. In 1857 he had so impressed Governor Salmon P. Chase with his power over the horse that the Ohio executive readily gave him a letter of recommendation to the governor of Canada. A single exhibition there won the commendation of civilian personnel of the government, and of army officers, who urged him to visit England, which he promptly did.

Following his first performance in Liverpool, Rarey's fame had spread rapidly, and it was not long before he had given two exhibitions at Windsor Castle before Queen Victoria and a select group of admiring royalty. After he had quickly tamed Cruiser, a large, black stallion, the most vicious horse in England—a murderous animal that was said to have bitten an iron bar in two and torn chunks of brick from his stall with his teeth—the American's conquest of the British Isles was complete.⁴

Rarey's courses of instruction at the Duke of Wellington's riding school were eagerly attended at high tuition. His manual on horse taming enjoyed a wide and ready sale. Becoming a

great social favorite, he was warmly sponsored by the English novelist, Robert Smith Surtees, and the renowned Robert Browning, who wrote a poem about him.

Denton Offutt had arrived in England in the autumn of 1858 fortified with glowing testimonials of eminent people from New York, Washington, D. C., New Orleans, Memphis, and famous horse breeders of central Kentucky.⁵ He was fighting mad and firmly resolved to challenge and expose John S. Rarey before the equestrian world as an audacious cribber who had brazenly appropriated the vital principles of *Teaching the Horse*, which Offutt had published in 1848 when Rarey was barely out of his teens.

Armed with a copy of his rival's manual and his own book, Offutt visited the chief cities of England, speaking to large crowds, comparing the two books paragraph by paragraph, roundly denouncing his adversary, and performing incredible feats with fractious animals—but leaving the stolid Britishers firmly wedded to their original idol and somewhat resentful of Offutt's methods.

Finally, convinced of the futility of his task, seething with rage and frustration, and sparked, no doubt, by liberal imbibing of England's most potent beverage, Offutt wrote a crackling, sputtering letter, with weird spelling, confused syntax, and lack of punctuation, to the *Spirit of the Times*, a turf and sporting journal published in New York, which happened to be a warm admirer of Rarey.

This letter intemperately denounced Rarey and his two brothers who were now in business with him, asserted that none of them had ever been heard of until long after "a Book I published in Cincinnati Ohio 1848," charged that "all that is worth anything in their Book is min," and accused Rarey of "Robing my copy right." If they had "the trooth to back them why not compare their book with min," Offutt demanded. "I offered to do it to the one in America at Fare in State Virginia at Frederick he wold not show it I compared it to many all say he is copped from min I publicly declared him a Rober

to his faze and Advertst him with the bove, Rober, swindler and Ignorant."

Denton closed this remarkable epistle, "you can use this as you like you will have to correct my spelling and Gramer I deal in fack you in words. If it dos not suit you pass it to such paper as may like it."

Of course it suited the *Spirit of the Times* exactly, and in the issue of June 25, 1859, it published this letter with malicious pleasure just as Offutt had written it, ignoring the writer's request for correction of spelling and other editing.

One morning shortly after Offutt wrote Lincoln about his claim against Tilghman, Tom McNeely, a young man from Petersburg, the little town that had gobbled up New Salem, came into Lincoln's office. Several months previously he had been in the South and had seen Offutt, who was giving a horse-taming exhibition at Woodworth, Mississippi. After the performance McNeely had introduced himself to Offutt, of whom the elder members of McNeely's family had frequently spoken, and Offutt had inquired eagerly about his old New Salem friends and especially about Lincoln.

"Mr. Offutt gave me a message to deliver to you, Mr. Lincoln," said McNeely somewhat hesitatingly, "but I hardly know whether I ought to deliver it or not."

"Tell it to me," said Lincoln. "Tell it just as Offutt said it."

"He told me to say to you," replied McNeely, "tell Lincoln to get out of his rascally business of politics and law and do something honest, like taming horses. Tell him to come down here and join me and we'll make a *barrel of money*."

Lincoln threw back his head and laughed heartily. "That's Offutt," he chuckled. "That's just like Offutt."⁶

With the coming of autumn Lincoln took the stump in other states. Thousands flocked to see and hear the man who had dealt the mighty Douglas such tremendous blows. "In personal appearance," said one newspaper, "he looks like any other 'over six foot' Kentuckian." Sober, earnest crowds lis-

tened attentively at Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Columbus, and Dayton. On Sunday, September 17, Lincoln and his wife with little Tad arrived in Cincinnati. They were met at the depot by a committee of prominent citizens and escorted to the Burnet House amid the boom of cannon and stirring music from several brass bands. That evening he spoke to an immense throng from the two-story balcony of E. and D. Kinsey's store on Fifth Street, which was illuminated by four jets of gas that flared from the sidewalk, a huge bonfire, and torch lights from the mammoth procession of the German Brigade.

Lincoln began his speech by saying that though "no longer a young man," he was "under some degree of embarrassment" because this was the first time in his life that he had "appeared before an audience in so great a city as this."

Douglas had spoken in Cincinnati recently, and the early portion of Lincoln's address was devoted to refuting false inferences which the Judge had drawn from the "house divided against itself" speech that Lincoln had made at Springfield "fifteen months ago."

"I now assure you," said Lincoln, "that I neither then had, nor have, or ever had, any purpose in any way of interfering with the institution of Slavery where it exists." He explained his position on this point for several minutes and then launched into what was obviously the most important part of his speech.

"I should not wonder," said he, "that there are some Kentuckians about this audience; we are close to Kentucky." Any way, he observed humorously, "we are on elevated ground, and by speaking distinctly, I should not wonder if some of the Kentuckians would hear me on the other side of the river. For that reason I propose to address a portion of what I have to say to the Kentuckians."

Lincoln said that he was what Kentuckians called a "Black Republican." He thought slavery was "wrong, morally, and politically." He desired that there should be no further spread of it in the United States and he "should not object if it should gradually terminate in the whole Union." He understood that

Kentuckians differed "radically" from him on this "proposition." Kentuckians "believe Slavery is a good thing; that Slavery is right; that it ought to be extended and perpetuated in this Union." Such was the "broad difference" between them.

In Kentucky, perhaps, in many of the Slave States certainly, you are trying to establish the rightfulness of Slavery by reference to the Bible. You are trying to show that slavery existed in the Bible times by Divine ordinance. Now Douglas is wiser than you, for your own benefit, upon that subject. Douglas knows that whenever you establish that Slavery was right by the Bible, it will occur that that Slavery was the Slavery of the *white man*—of men without reference to color—and he knows very well that you may entertain that idea in Kentucky as much as you please, but you will never win any Northern support upon it.

He makes a wiser argument for you; he makes the argument that the slavery of the *black man*, the slavery of the man who has a skin of different color from your own, is right. He thereby brings to your support Northern voters who could not for a moment be brought by your own argument of the Bible-right of slavery.

Lincoln dwelt at length upon the sophistry of the proslavery argument and declared the certainty of ultimate victory for the Republicans. However, he assured his listeners that when the Republicans won, the vanquished need have no fear of hostile or vindictive treatment.

We mean to treat you as near as we possibly can, like Washington, Jefferson and Madison treated you. We mean to leave you alone, and in no way to interfere with your institution; to abide by all and every compromise of the constitution. . . . We mean to remember that you are as good as we; that there is no difference between us other than the difference of circumstances. . . . We mean to marry your girls when we have a chance—the white ones I mean—and I have the honor to inform you that I once did have a chance in that way.

Then he closed his speech with grateful thanks to the crowd that had "stayed and heard" him "with great patience."⁷

What Lincoln said at Cincinnati received scant attention

from the Bluegrass press. On September 20 the *Kentucky Statesman*, rabid supporter of John C. Breckinridge, noted briefly: "Honorable Abr. Lincoln, the defeated candidate for the United States Senate in Illinois, addressed the people of Cincinnati on Saturday evening last, in reply to the speech of Judge Douglas on the 9th." However, on October 14 the *Statesman* attacked him in a bitter editorial: "Black Republicanism—its Fanaticism." Quoting a portion of Lincoln's speech which contained the "house divided against itself" declaration, it asked: "Can the Whigs authoritatively deny that Lincoln has not the confidence of his party, when it *unanimously* nominated him their candidate for the United States Senate upon the very occasion when he delivered the incendiary and fanatical speech from which we have given an extract?"

Several months after Lincoln's visit to Cincinnati he received a letter from the Burnet House enclosing a bill for his expenses there, saying apologetically: "We relied upon the Republican Committee, but as yet have been unable to find anyone willing to take the responsibility of paying same." Lincoln promptly wrote William M. Dickson, Mrs. Lincoln's cousin by marriage and a prominent party leader in Cincinnati, enclosing a copy of the hotel's letter. He stated that before leaving the Burnet House he "had called at the office of the Hotel, and was there distinctly told the bill 'was settled.' . . . As to wines, liquors & cigars," said Lincoln, "we had none—absolutely none. These last may have been in room 15, by order of Committee, but I do not recollect them at all. Please look into this, and write me. I can and will pay it if it is right; but I do not wish to be 'diddled!'"⁸

In December he made several speeches in Kansas, followed by his address at Cooper Institute in New York and another trip to New England. Then the press of the country began to mention him as the dark horse in the approaching presidential campaign, and Lincoln himself confessed to a friend: "The taste *is* in my mouth a little."⁹ However, as convention time approached, William H. Seward, United States senator and

former governor of New York, had forged far in the lead of likely candidates, although the *Kentucky Statesman* observed that "his most formidable competitor seems to be Abe Lincoln."

During these months Cassius M. Clay stumped central Kentucky on behalf of Lincoln and the Republican party. On January 10, 1860, he spoke at Frankfort. This time the hall of the House of Representatives was refused him, and so he harangued a rather menacing crowd for four hours from the portico of the capitol. The proslavery men in Madison County, just across the Kentucky River from Fayette, armed themselves with shotguns and pistols, and declared that Clay should not fill his speaking engagement at Richmond on April 4. Obtaining a cannon from Lexington, they planted it in the public square of the county seat and arranged with Captain John Hunt Morgan to march his Lexington Rifles to their assistance, if necessary.

Unintimidated by these warlike demonstrations, Clay was on hand at the appointed time and place with two big navy revolvers and his trusty bowie knife.¹⁰ In rare form, ignoring shouts to "shoot him through the head," he denounced the proslavery faction with his usual vehemence, explained the principles of the new party, and strongly urged the nomination of Abraham Lincoln for President. "Many 'Union' men," said the *New York World*, "we are told declared for Lincoln that day."¹¹

The Republican national convention assembled in Chicago, May 16, 1860. The nomination of Seward seemed inevitable, although Bates of Missouri, Cameron of Pennsylvania, and Chase of Ohio had strong backers. Outside of Illinois the Lincoln strength was an unknown quantity. Conservative members of the Kentucky delegation from the Bluegrass region were for Lincoln, while the radical element from the eastern part of the state and counties along the Ohio River were for Chase and Seward.

By the afternoon of the second day it was apparent that the

nominee must be a man conservative enough on the slavery question to hold the Border States. On the night before the balloting a group of Lincoln's friends from the Bluegrass were busy in a final desperate effort to swing the wavering delegations to their candidate. Through crowded hotel lobbies, private suites, barrooms, and other public places they made their way, arguing, pleading the availability of Lincoln.

The members of the Kansas delegation received word that a committee of Border State Unionists would like to confer with them. Soon their little parlor was filled with a group of "as resolute a looking body of men—sharp eyed, broad jawed," as young Addison G. Proctor, a delegate from Emporia, had ever seen. In the midst of complete silence their spokesman stepped forward to the head of the table. He was, according to Proctor, "Cassius M. Clay of Kentucky."

"As he stood posed there, ready," said Proctor, "he was the ideal Kentucky Colonel with all the mannerisms of that element so well pictured in our literature. A fascinating man handsome to look upon, faultlessly dressed, keen, bright and emotional. We could not keep our eyes off as he stood like a waiting orator charged with a volcanic mission."

Stepping a little closer to the table, leaning forward in a sort of confidential gesture, the spokesman uttered a few burning words that Proctor never forgot.

"Gentlemen, we are on the brink of a great Civil War." He paused as if to note the effect. He seemed to have caught a look of incredulity creeping over our faces that he chose to interpret in his own way. Straightening himself, looking every inch the orator, he said:

"You undoubtedly have heard that remark before, but I want you to know that that fact will soon be flashed to you in a way you will more readily comprehend. Gentlemen, we are from the South and we want you to know that the South is preparing for war. If the man that you nominate at this Convention should be elected on the platform you have already adopted, the South will attempt the destruction of this Union. On two southern borders, stretching from the east coast of Maryland to the Ozarks of Missouri, there

stands today a body of resolute men who are determined that this Union shall not be dissolved, except at the end of a terrible struggle in resistance. . . . You must give us a leader at this time who will inspire our confidence and our courage."

Leaning forward in a half-suppressed whisper he said, "We want you to name Abraham Lincoln. He was born among us and we believe he understands us."¹²

Next day Abraham Lincoln was nominated on the third ballot. The convention gave Cassius M. Clay 101 votes for Vice-President, but finally decided on Hamlin for "geographical" reasons.¹³ A few weeks later, the Southern Democracy selected as Lincoln's adversary the handsome, black-haired, magnetic playmate of Mary Todd's childhood, John C. Breckinridge of Lexington, Kentucky. These two candidates with Stephen A. Douglas as the nominee of the Northern Democrats and John Bell representing the Union party made up the field, and campaign banners were unfurled for battle.

Clay wrote Lincoln pledging his unfaltering loyalty and active support, to which the Republican candidate responded promptly:

Springfield, Ills. May 26, 1860

Hon. C. M. Clay.

My dear Sir:

Yours of the 21st. is received, and for which I sincerely thank you. The humblest of all whose names were before the convention, I shall, in the canvass, and especially afterwards, if the result shall devolve the administration upon me, need the support of all the talent, popularity, and courage, North and South, which is in the party; and it is with sincere gratification that I receive this early indication of your unwavering purpose to stand for the right. Your Obt. Servt.

A. Lincoln¹⁴

Seven weeks later Clay began a series of speaking engagements in Indiana. "I see by the despatches," wrote Lincoln, "that Mr. Clay had a rousing meeting at Vincennes."

So gratified was he with Clay's efforts that he urged him to fill as many appointments as possible in Illinois, "com-

mencing, say, at Marshall, in Clark county, and thence South and West, along our Wabash and Ohio river border."

Lincoln concluded his letter by informing Clay that "at Rockport you will be in the county within which I was brought up from my eighth year—having left Kentucky at that point of my life."¹⁵

Clay agreed to speak at Marshall and to "run on till Sept. 9th." In a closing paragraph of his letter he suggested that Lincoln "put Andrew Jackson's 'Union' speech" in his inaugural address and "stay clear of cliques."¹⁶

"As to the inaugural," Lincoln wrote in reply, "I have not yet commenced getting it up; while it affords me great pleasure to be able to say the cliques have not yet commenced upon me."¹⁷

However, Lincoln did not forget Clay's advice about Jackson's speech. Several months later, when he locked himself up in an empty, dusty back room over his brother-in-law's store to write his address, he took with him only three reference works, and one of these was Jackson's "Proclamation against Nullification."¹⁸

By the middle of August the political pot was boiling in Kentucky. Around Lexington the Republican ticket received scant attention from the local newspapers. Only a few times were there any direct references to Lincoln, and these were in a mildly contemptuous vein. "Lincoln told a correspondent," declared the *Statesman*, "that he had received an invitation to come to Kentucky, but declined because he thought it was a mere trap of the Kentuckians to catch him, tar and feather him, and set him on fire to make a torch-light procession of him."¹⁹ To this campaign canard Lincoln made prompt and vigorous denial, saying that he did not fear any such treatment at the hands of Kentuckians. "I dislike," said he, "to be represented to them as slandering them in that way."²⁰

The followers of Breckinridge realized that Bell and Douglas were the men they had to beat, and they now attacked the

Little Giant furiously with the very weapons that Lincoln had used against him at Freeport. Douglas, they pointed out, had admitted that slavery could be excluded from the territories by unfriendly legislation. This stamped him as an enemy to every slaveholder. And since Bell, the Union candidate, ignored the slavery question altogether, it was apparent that John C. Breckinridge was the only true friend of the South.

On September 5, 1860, Lexington's favorite son returned to his native city from a triumphant tour of the southern states and was given an enthusiastic welcome by fifteen thousand people at a barbecue in the "Ashland" woods. After a feast of roast beef, mutton, and burgoo, Major Breckinridge "addressed the audience on the political issues of the day," using the answer of Douglas at Freeport with powerful effect. Feelingly he defended himself against the personal accusations of his enemies amid fervent exclamations of "That's so, John C."

He denied that he had signed a petition for the pardon of "John Brown, the Harper's Ferry murderer and traitor." He admitted his esteem and affection for Dr. Robert J. Breckinridge, but denied that he had ever sympathized with his uncle's antislavery doctrines. He emphatically repudiated the assertion that he favored disunion. "Born within sight of this spot where we are met," he exclaimed, "known to you for nearly forty years—your representative in the Legislature of Kentucky, in the Congress of the United States and other stations of public trust I proudly challenge the bitterest enemy I may have on earth to point out an act, to disclose an utterance, to reveal a thought of mine hostile to the Constitution and Union of the States."

The speaker charged that Lincoln represented "the most offensive principles before the country"; that it had been said that he was the only man in the way of Lincoln's defeat. "I agree he ought to be defeated," said Breckinridge, as tremendous applause crackled through the lofty treetops. "I agree that he represents the most obnoxious principles in issue in this canvass. I agree that his principles are clearly unconstitu-

tional, and if the Republican Party should undertake to carry them out, they will destroy the Union. But does anyone pretend that Mr. Lincoln will carry a single Southern state? In any event, was Mr. Douglas willing to unite in the only practical mode for the defeat of Mr. Lincoln?"

"For myself," he said in conclusion, "conscious that my foot is planted on the rock of the Constitution—surrounded and sustained by friends I love and cherish—holding principles that have been in every form endorsed by my native commonwealth—with a spirit erect and unbroken I defy all calumny and calmly await the triumph of the truth."²¹

On election day in November, Abraham Lincoln received only two votes in his wife's home town and only five votes in the entire county of Fayette.

Highly pleased at the local returns so flattering to Breckinridge, the *Kentucky Statesman* rejoiced editorially:

Mr. Breckinridge received more votes than any of his competitors in the *Ward* in which he resides.

He beat all the other candidates in the *Precinct* where he holds his voting residence.

He carried the *City of Lexington* by a handsome plurality over all the other candidates.

He beat Bell, Douglas and Lincoln combined in the *Ashland District* by a very handsome majority.

He is thus sustained by his *Ward, Precinct, City and District*.

The national result, however, plunged the *Statesman* into deepest gloom. "No intelligent man of the South," said its editor, "will fail to deprecate the election of Lincoln and therein the success of the Republican party as the most serious and lamentable calamity which could have befallen our Republic."²²

Lincoln and the "Black Republican Party" were now bitterly denounced by many individuals, including some who had earnestly opposed secession.

Old Abe Lincoln—is an infernal old Jackass [wrote an impetuous young citizen of Lexington on November 26, 1860]. I

should relish his groans and agonies if I could see him put to torture in hell or anywhere else. He has chosen to become the representative of the Republican Party and as such I should like to hang him. I am not for Disunion, but I am for resistance to the Republican Party as long as there is breath in it or any of its members; fight it to the last but preserve the Union. But I must hush on politics, at least on Republicanism for I can talk calmly of any other but its partisans; them so foul and infamous, so traitorous and worthy of damnation I cannot tolerate.²³

But there were cooler heads tempered by age, experience, and personal acquaintance who held a different impression of the President-elect. "Lincoln has grown great since we knew him," observed a Lexington friend of earlier days. "His speeches in reply to Douglas certainly show him to be a man of sound mind and clear head. Those who know him best have entire confidence in his firmness. I hope and pray he may be found equal to the trying trust."²⁴

The President-elect was deeply grateful for a letter of congratulations from Joshua F. Speed, the most intimate friend he ever had. "If it would be agreeable to you I will come & see you," wrote Speed. "I think [I] can impart to you some information as to men & public sentiment here which may be valuable."

Promptly Speed received the following reply:

Springfield. Ills.
Nov. 19, 1860

Dear Speed—

Yours of the 14th. is received. I shall be at Chicago Thursday the 22nd Inst. and one or two succeeding days. Could you not meet me there?

Mary thinks of going with me; and therefore I suggest that Mrs. S. accompany you.

Please let this be private, as I prefer a very great crowd should not gather at Chicago.

Respects to Mrs. S.,

Your friend, as ever
A. Lincoln²⁵

All eyes were now turned toward the South. Would the "Cotton Republics" make good their oft-repeated threats to secede? Though the *Statesman* still held the view that "No intelligent man of the South will fail to deprecate the election of Lincoln . . . as the most serious and lamentable calamity which could have befallen our Republic," it now urged the South to "await full development of Lincoln's policy before striking the fatal blow to the Union."²⁶

But the feeble admonitions of the Kentucky press fell on deaf ears. The time for action had arrived. The verdict at the polls was an open challenge of northern aggression which must not be ignored. And while the President-elect sat "pale and careworn" and helpless in his office in the statehouse at Springfield, southern leaders, some with keen regret, others with swagger and clanking of sabers, set about the grim task of wrecking the federal Union.

Before the end of the year South Carolina had passed ordinances of secession. Florida, Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, and Texas were preparing to follow her example. Custom-houses and arsenals with their stores of muskets, gunpowder, and other accouterments of war were being seized daily. Commissioners from Mississippi and Alabama were on their way to Frankfort to urge that Kentucky cast her lot with the seceding states.

No one realized more acutely than Lincoln the importance of Kentucky to the Union.²⁷ The Ohio River ran along her northern border for hundreds of miles to the Mississippi. The town of Cairo, lying at the junction of these two rivers, was the terminus of the Illinois Central Railroad, with unequalled advantages as an army base, and was therefore the key to military operations down the Mississippi Valley.

"I think to lose Kentucky," wrote Lincoln to Senator Browning, "is nearly the same as to lose the whole game. Kentucky gone, we can not hold Missouri, nor, as I think, Maryland. These all against us, and the job on our hands is too large for us."²⁸

The President-elect knew only too well where the danger lay in Kentucky. The Bluegrass, with Lexington as the center, was still the largest slaveholding section of the state. If the trend toward secession could be checked in this region, Kentucky might be saved. How to bring this about was the great problem, although the air was thick with suggestions from various Lexingtonians. Judge Robertson wrote Senator Crittenden that John C. Breckinridge had just consulted Lincoln, strongly urging him to "organize a national & representative Cabinet consisting of three Southern Union men of good character and four moderate Republicans," but that Lincoln was "non-committal."²⁹ These gentlemen, of course, were not aware of the fact that Lincoln had wanted Joshua Speed in his cabinet, though he had declared himself unavailable for any office; that the President-elect had then offered to appoint James Guthrie of Louisville secretary of war; or that he then had under consideration for cabinet positions John A. Gilmer of North Carolina, Randall Hunt of Louisiana, and Meredith P. Gentry of Tennessee.³⁰

Senator Garret Davis wrote his colleague Crittenden that "Unless there is some satisfactory indication shortly given by the free states that they intend to permit the fugitive slave law to be executed and to cease their assaults upon slavery, Kentucky with an overwhelming majority will range herself with the South."³¹ "Let them go on in peace with their experiment," was Crittenden's reply.

The most ominous phase of the situation was the apathy of leading Kentucky Unionists. Though opposed to secession themselves, they refused to have any part in the coercion of friends who were about to embrace it. "The work of disintegration is rapidly going on, and the whole Confederate structure is hourly crumbling," observed the *Statesman*. "We do not hesitate to believe that Kentucky, indignant and united, will take her position along with the section to which she belongs, and present her face to the enemy."³²

It was at this critical hour that Dr. Robert J. Breckinridge

drew his glittering blade and stepped into the breach. Few men had a wider or more influential acquaintance throughout the Border States than Breckinridge. In former years he had been the pastor of one of the largest churches in Baltimore. Several close kinsmen who lived in St. Louis were leaders in the civic affairs of Missouri. His duties as a high officer in the Presbyterian General Assembly had carried him frequently to many parts of the country. Now the Doctor began to mobilize his friends in Maryland, Missouri, and Kentucky for the Union. To one of his sons he wrote:

I am utterly opposed and will resist to the uttermost of my ability a Confederacy of the fifteen states—deeming such a result the most fatal issue for Kentucky that the terrible condition of things admits of. Show this letter to Robert and let me earnestly beseech you both not to take a single step, even the very smallest, that can by any possibility conduct you into the direction of disunion. The whole thing is utter madness, and the pretexts for it are some futile, some false, some atrocious; not one of them such as becomes a statesman, a philosopher, a patriot, or a Christian; not one of them will endure the light of history, the judgment of mankind or the scrutiny of posterity.³³

On December 25, 1860, Colonel Featherstone, the special commissioner from Mississippi, arrived in Frankfort. He presented to Governor Magoffin a request from the legislature of his state that he call an extra session of the Kentucky General Assembly to take immediate steps with the South "in adoption of efficient measures for their common defense and safety." Shortly thereafter S. F. Hale presented the governor with a similar request from Alabama, and on that same day the thing happened that Lincoln most feared: Magoffin issued a call for the legislature to convene on January 17, 1861.³⁴

Lincoln knew that the governor was the leader of the Breckinridge Democrats in Kentucky. He was aware of the fact that the legislature which would assemble in January was composed of the same men who had so recently returned Breckinridge to the Senate by a decisive vote. There was every reason to

believe that this "Southern Rights" sentiment still predominated, and the discouraged, baffled Unionists seemed ready to throw up their hands in despair.

The call of Governor Magoffin was received with loud approbation by the secessionists of Kentucky. The *Statesman* chided those who were "now indulging in lamentations over a Union which is as much a part of the history of the past as the Roman Republic. . . . The Union is dismembered," it reminded its readers, "but men will not realize that it is dissolved until the fact is brought home to their own doors."³⁵

On all sides it was freely predicted that the General Assembly would adopt ordinances of secession and that Kentucky would no longer "hesitate to cast her lot with her own brethren." Confronted by this alarming situation, many earnest Unionists of the Bluegrass were now ready to allow the southern states to "go on in peace with their experiment." Rather than jeopardize Kentucky, they were willing to withdraw all objections to the course that the South had taken so long as their own state did not secede.

One of the ablest lawyers of Kentucky, Madison C. Johnson, well known to Lincoln as counsel for Mrs. Todd in the settlement of his father-in-law's estate, called Senator Garret Davis to his office in Lexington and showed him resolutions which he intended to present to the legislature. They recited "that the President and Senate of the United States have authority by the Constitution, under the power of making Treaties, to acknowledge the independence of and cede from the jurisdiction of the United States any of the States, provided that the people of such States shall clearly and deliberately give their consent thereto"; that "it being impossible to collect the revenues or execute the laws of the United States in those States which have passed acts of secession from the Union, without involving the country in all the calamities of Civil War, the time has arrived when, in the opinion of the General Assembly, negotiations should commence for a treaty recognizing and granting independence to those States."³⁶ Senator Davis

was much impressed by Johnson's plan, and Senator Crittenden also approved it; but Dr. Breckinridge denounced the proposition with vehement scorn.

The Doctor had just completed plans for the publication of a militant Union journal called the *Quarterly Review*, of which he was to be the editor. Hundreds of friends in the Border States were eager to subscribe. Every mail brought many letters urging him to do his utmost against disunion in Kentucky. And when President Buchanan issued a proclamation fixing January 4, 1861, as a "day set apart for fasting, humiliation and prayer on account of the fearful condition and terrible perils of our beloved country," Breckinridge promptly announced that on that day he would address the people of Kentucky at Lexington on the "state of the Union."

The Odd Fellows Hall across from the courthouse was packed to the farthest corners on the afternoon of the fast day when Dr. Breckinridge mounted the rostrum, adjusted his steel-rimmed spectacles, and looked out over the tense and none too friendly audience. Then, with only a few introductory remarks he plunged earnestly into the heart of his subject. The vital question now before the South was union or disunion. Conscientious men were strangely divided in spite of the "inestimable blessing connected with the preservation of our National Union, and the intolerable evils involved in its destruction."

He dwelt at length on the glorious history of these United States founded on the principle that "the will of the greater part should prevail and that the smaller part should have the power of appeal to this will at the polls." He vividly emphasized the "frightful evils of rending this nation. . . . Secession is a proceeding which begins by tearing to pieces the whole fabric of government, both social and political," he said. "It begins by rendering all redress of all possible evils utterly impossible under the system that exists, for its very object is to destroy its existence. Its very design is not to reform the administration of existing laws, not to obtain their repeal or

modification, but to annihilate the institutions of the country and to make many nations out of one."

The speaker then made what Lincoln's home paper applauded as "an ingenious but sound argument" on state sovereignty, which the President-elect read with eagerness and profit.³⁷ "No States in the Union," he said, "ever had any sovereignty at all independent of and except as they were *United States*. When they speak of recovering their sovereignty, when they speak of returning to their condition as sovereign in which they were before they were members of the Confederacy called at first the United Colonies, and then the United States, they speak of a thing that is historically without any foundation." He then traced the growth of the colonies from royal charter grants to a confederacy that wrested independence from King George.

What sovereignty did Kentucky ever have except the sovereignty that she has as a State of these United States? We were a District of Virginia. We became a State at the same moment we entered the Union, and for the same purpose, and for good and all. . . . The people, therefore, can no more legally throw off their national allegiance, than they can legally throw off their state allegiance. Nor can any State any more legally absolve the allegiance of its people to the Nation, than the Nation can legally absolve the allegiance due by the people to the State they live in. Either attempt considered in any legal, in any constitutional, in any historical light, is pure madness.

Dr. Breckinridge devoted the latter part of his address to a demonstration that Kentucky and the other Border States of Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, and Missouri had little in common with the Cotton States. Their system of slavery were as radically different as the commodities they produced.

"Do you want the slave-trade reopened?" he inquired. "Do you want free trade and direct taxation? Do you want some millions more of African cannibals thrown amongst you broadcast throughout the whole slave states? . . . If that is your understanding of high national prosperity, where the great idea

is more negroes, more cotton, direct taxes, free imports from all nations, and the conquest of all outlying land that will bring more cotton, then undoubtedly, Kentucky is no longer what she has been and her new career, beginning with secession, leads her far away from her strength and renown." The address closed with an exhortation that "Kentucky stand by the Constitution and the union of the country to the last extremity."³⁸

The old Doctor's speech was a trumpet call to the faltering, disheartened Unionists of Kentucky and the other Border States. Everywhere it was received with enthusiastic praise. Patriotic citizens of Baltimore had a large edition of the fast day sermon printed in pamphlet form, which was widely circulated in Maryland.³⁹ The speech appeared in many newspapers throughout the country, and nowhere was it more warmly endorsed than in Springfield, Illinois. "We commend it to our Kentucky friends in this State," said the *State Journal*, "who may have recently heard very different doctrines from theologians not quite so eminent as Dr. Breckinridge, and from weak-kneed politicians who wish to dragoon the descendants of Kentuckians in our free State to a submission to the demands of secessionists, which the true Kentuckian spurns."⁴⁰ Letters from Maryland, Missouri, and various parts of Kentucky poured in to Dr. Breckinridge, expressing warmest gratitude.⁴¹

It was in Kentucky, of course, that the fast day sermon had its greatest weight.⁴² Thousands of printed copies were scattered through the Bluegrass, and when the legislature convened on January 17, the speech was on the desk of every member, much to the annoyance of Governor Magoffin, who could not help feeling that it sealed the doom of all his fondest hopes.⁴³

Other influential citizens of Lexington, aroused by Breckinridge's ringing defiance of disunion, now arrayed themselves openly on the side of the government. "'I have received your letter," wrote General Leslie Combs, a survivor of the War of 1812, to his son in Missouri, "desiring to know my opinion

as to the result of the movements by the Palmetto—Snake State and her Cotton State cooperators to dissolve our glorious Union and thus inevitably plunge us, first into civil war, next into anarchy and lastly into the darkness of despotism. *Answer:* I think they will *fail* and thus win the scorn of the world without the slightest sympathy from any quarter. . . . Let who will give way, rely upon it that your native Kentucky will stand firm.”⁴⁴

On January 30 Lincoln packed his old carpetbag and slipped quietly out of Springfield to pay a last visit to his aged and beloved stepmother down in Coles County. Arriving at Charleston on an eastbound freight late in the afternoon, he trudged through mud, slush, and ice, in the bleak, fading twilight, the length of the long train to a two-horse rig which would take him eight miles along a narrow, rough dirt road over which he had hauled wood with a yoke of oxen to the tiny village of Farmington.

For a few precious, fleeting hours the President-elect and the frail little woman who loved him better than any child born to her sat with their arms around each other. Deeply depressed at her firm conviction that she would never see him again, he held her hand, stroked her face, and tried to reassure her. Together they stood beside the grave of his father in the unkempt country churchyard—then a long embrace and a tearful good-by.

Next day Lincoln was back in his office at the statehouse busy with final arrangements for the journey to Washington. By February 7 he had rented his home, disposed of his furniture, and moved his family over to the Chenery House.

In the late afternoon of his last day in Springfield he met his law partner, William H. Herndon, for a last conference in their dingy old office. For a short while they discussed unfinished legal business and went hastily over the the books of the firm. Then Lincoln threw himself down on the battered, rickety sofa and for a few minutes lay with his tired face toward the ceiling, without speaking. Then he began to talk of the

early days of their practice, recalling the humorous features of various lawsuits on the circuit. Thus his reminiscences ran on until dusk crept through the grimy little windows and it was suppertime.

As he gathered a bundle of books and papers under his arm and started out, he spoke of the old sign, "Lincoln & Herndon," that swung on rusty hinges over the door at the foot of the steps. "Let it hang there undisturbed," he said to Herndon in a lowered voice. "Give our clients to understand that the election of a President makes no change in the firm of Lincoln and Herndon. If I live, I am coming back some time and then we will go right on practicing law as if nothing had happened." He lingered for a moment, as if to take a last look at the familiar quarters, and then passed for the last time into the narrow hallway and down the creaky stairs.⁴⁵

The following morning, February 11, the President-elect was up early. With his own hands he roped his trunks, tacked at the ends hotel cards on which he had written "A. Lincoln, White House. Washington, D. C.," and helped load them on the depot omnibus.

Shortly before eight o'clock the small presidential party arrived at the small brick depot of the Great Western Railroad. The special train—pilot engine, Hinckley locomotive, baggage car, and one passenger coach—had steam up on the siding.

The skies were low and heavy. A solemn throng of nearly a thousand people stood in the cold, drizzling rain as Lincoln reached the rear platform, turned, and removed his hat. Previously he had informed newspaper reporters that there would be no speechmaking until after he had left Springfield, but now as he looked into the expectant, upturned faces of his old friends and neighbors, he forgot this assurance, and in a voice that quavered slightly with suppressed emotion, he spoke a few simple words of farewell.

My friends—No one, not in my situation, can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place, and the kindness of these people, I owe every thing. Here I have lived a quarter

of a century, and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born, and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when, or whether ever, I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine Being, who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance I cannot fail. Trusting in Him, who can go with me, and remain with you and be every where for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell.⁴⁶

As he finished, the conductor pulled the bell cord, and in another moment the little train was gliding out into the mist—Lincoln standing, until lost from view, bareheaded on the rear platform.

The text of Lincoln's brief impromptu speech as printed next day in the *Springfield State Journal* contained the sentence: "All the strange, chequered past seems to crowd now upon my mind." Sometime during that day, as the presidential special rolled toward Indianapolis, an early friend of that past—old, broken financially, in the late stages of consumption, and drinking heavily—sat down in far-off Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and wrote a characteristic letter, reminiscent—now and then—of those rosy, confident years when big money was just around the corner. He addressed the letter to "The Elect President A Lincoln." He gave him his "best respects" and hoped to find him "and Family In Joying the Helth of Life." He told his old store clerk that he had lost his property for various reasons, including "Misrepasentation of other of my Profession." And then he continued:

You will sea that I have sued John S. Rairy of Ohio at N York for \$100,000.00 dollars he has large mounts If I git it I will not Except any office or If I can git hear The Appointment of Physiologist of this State I will be in warm climate better for me If not I hope you think me worthy of the Trust of office. I hope you will Give me one Pattent office or the office of Agriculteral Department or the Commisary for Purchais of Horses Mules Beef for Army or

Mail agent I can do more for the Advansment of Selecting good Animals [than] all other

And more to Improve the breads of Animals, And Feed them Preserve ther hellth and to Grais the Lands old and pore lands of all the people in America The papers say that Animl in nation is worth Ten hundrd million Dollars they can be Improved Ten per sen Annullay for all time This wold be one hundred million a year

I have to be looking out to live I hope you will Favour me of my hopes as I may Seak a plan for Livin so that I may take the bes plan.

You Frend and well wisher

Denton Offutt⁴⁷

Next afternoon, on his fifty-second birthday, Lincoln arrived in Cincinnati, where he spent the night and made a short speech from the balcony of the Burnet House. No one could look on this "vast assemblage," he said, without realizing the fact that "parties were united in this reception." This was right. This was as it should have been if Douglas or Bell or Breckinridge had been elected. This was the American way—impossible anywhere without the influence of free institutions.

Lincoln reminded his audience that he had spoken only once before in Cincinnati. He recalled that on that occasion he had addressed much of his speech to Kentuckians, that he had "in a playful manner, but with sincere words," expressed the opinion that the Republicans would "ultimately beat" the Democrats, but that when this happened, there would be no interference with their "institutions," and that the victorious party would "abide by all and every compromise" of the Constitution.

"Fellow Citizens of Kentucky—friends—brethren, may I call you in my new position," he said earnestly, in the midst of great applause, "I see no occasion and feel no inclination to retract a word of this. If it shall not be made good, be assured the fault shall not be mine." He closed his remarks with the solemn wish that the "American people, under the Providence

of God . . . shall again be brethren, forgetting all parties—ignoring all parties.”⁴⁸

Lincoln had felt—and no doubt hoped, though, as it turned out, in vain—that he might be invited to make a speech in Kentucky, probably in Covington, during his stopover in Cincinnati. Consequently, before leaving Springfield he had hastily written out on five small pages of manuscript what he intended to say if such an occasion should arise. His first sentence was, “I am grateful, for the opportunity [*sic*] your invitation affords me to appear before an audience of my native state.” He then went on to say that during the past several months, many well-meaning citizens, “Kentuckians, among others,” had expressed the opinion that he could “by a word, restore peace to the country.” By what word? Many words of his, he said, were already before the country, and he had been elected “on the faith of those words.” Is the desired word to be confirmatory of these, or must it be contradictory? If the former, would it not be “useless repe[ti]tion”; if the latter, would it not be “dishonorable and treacherous”?

Then, too, it was urged that this word must be spoken before he took the oath of office. Thus, the speaking of the word became a “*sine qua non*” to inauguration. Would any Bell man, or Douglas man, or Breckinridge man allow his own candidate to yield to such terms, if he had been elected? “Who amongst you,” asked Lincoln, “would not die by the proposition, that your candidate, being elected, should be inaugurated [*sic*], solely on the conditions of the constitution, and laws, or not at all. What Kentuckian, worthy of his birth place, would not do this?” He paused and then said impressively, “Gentlemen, I too, am a Kentuckian.”

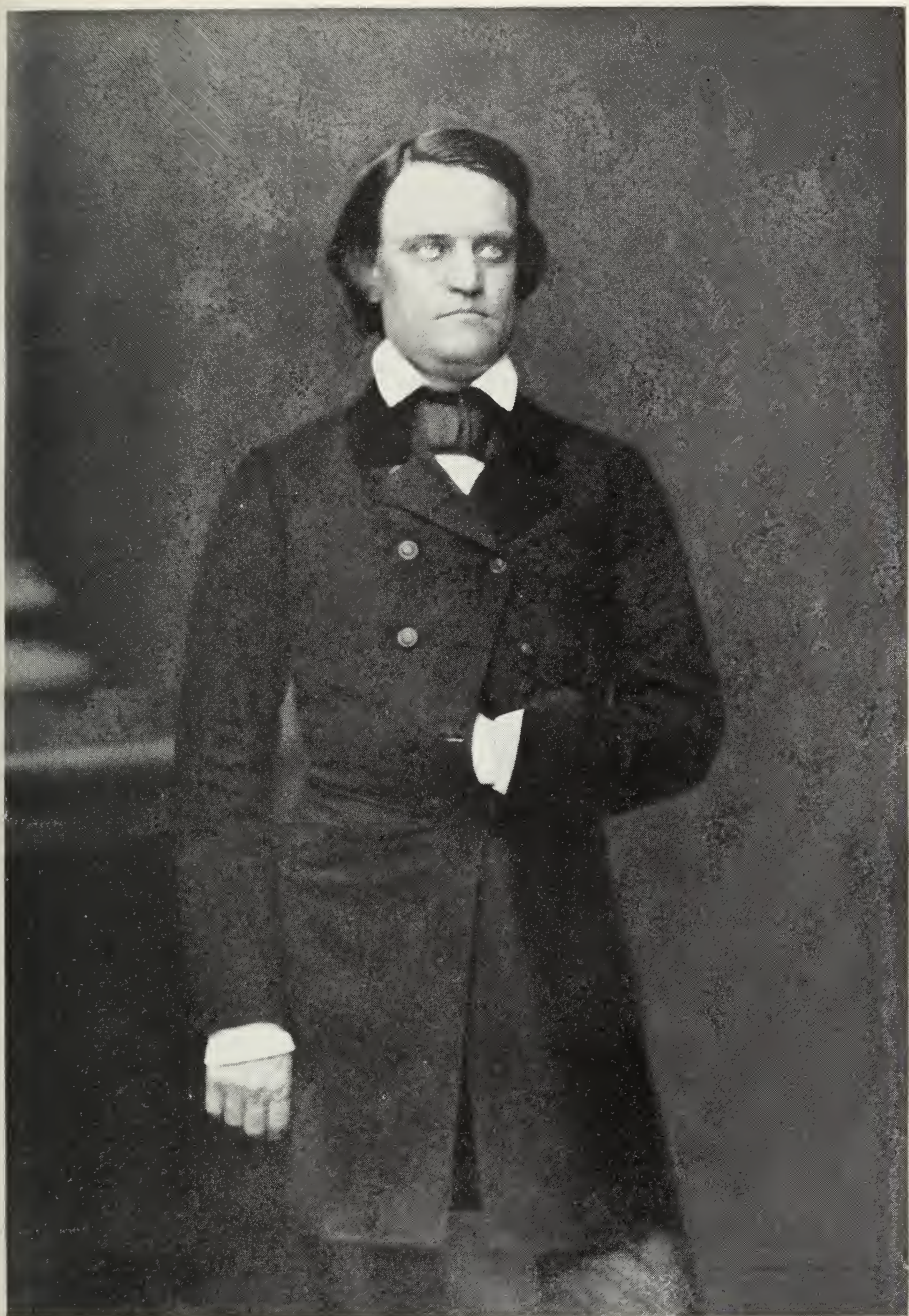
What was desired of course, he continued, was that he should shift the ground upon which he had been elected. This he had declined to do—not because he was stubborn or because of “any indifference to the troubles of the country,” but because of his firm belief “that, if, when a Chief Magistrate is

constitutionally elected, he cannot be inaugurated till he betrays those who elected him by breaking his pledges, and surrendering to those who tried and failed to defeat him at the polls, this government and all popular government is already at an end."⁴⁹

It is not known, of course, what effect Lincoln's Cincinnati speech had on Kentuckians generally, but one of them, at least, has left a record of how the speaker impressed him on that occasion. Five days after the journey toward Washington had been resumed, a young Lexingtonian, John Jeffrey, wrote back home to "Dear Aleck," his brother: "Old Abe Lincoln was here this week & looks, talks, & acts just as you may have seen some long, slab sided flat boat 'Capting,' who had sold his 'prodooce' at Memphis & invested 12\$ at a slop shop tailor's in rigging himself out for Sunday. He is a disgrace as the head-boss of any civilized nation."⁵⁰

On February 13, 1861, the two houses of Congress met in joint session to count the electoral votes for President of the United States. By eight o'clock crowds were swarming up Capitol Hill, and as the hour approached, "not only the galleries but the lobbies leading to them were packed, the ladies filling every seat appropriated to their use."⁵¹ For days rumors had flown thick and fast that Vice-President Breckinridge would refuse to announce the election of Lincoln and thus give the signal for the seizure of Washington by the overwhelming number of southern sympathizers within its gates. General Scott had directed that no person should be admitted to the Capitol building except senators, representatives, government employees, and those who had tickets signed by the speaker of the House or the presiding officer of the Senate. Armed guards were stationed at every entrance to enforce this order.

Shortly after noon the senators filed into the House chamber and took their seats in a semicircle arranged for them in front of the speaker's desk. The presiding officer was conducted to his chair, and tellers took their places at the clerk's table.



JOHN C. BRECKINRIDGE

Springfield, Ill. May 26. 1860
Hon. C. M. Clay

My dear Sir:

Yours of the 21st is received, and for which I sincerely thank you— The humblest of all whose names were before the Convention, I shall, in the canvass, and especially afterwards, if the penit shall devolve the administration upon me, need the support of all the talent, popularity, and courage, North and South, which is in the party; and it is with sincere gratification that I receive the strong indication of your unwavering purpose to stand for the right—

Yours Obedt Servt
A. Lincoln

Vice-President Breckinridge then arose and in a calm firm voice announced that the two houses were assembled to count the electoral votes for President and Vice-President of the United States.

"It is my duty," he said, "to open the certificates of election in the presence of the two Houses, and I now proceed to the performance of that duty."

No one knew the gravity of the occasion better than the chairman. None realized more than he that fully three fourths of those who sat beneath the vaulted dome were armed to the teeth and that the slightest spark might touch off a shocking conflagration. But those who expected John C. Breckinridge to stultify his high office by a conspiracy to overthrow the government did not know the man. Firmly believing the triumph of the Republican party to be a menace to the South, he would shortly return his commission as senator to his constituents in Kentucky, forsaking fame and fortune under the Stars and Bars. But today he was the presiding officer of the federal Senate, and Jupiter never ruled a council of Olympus with a firmer hand.

A southern member arose, but the chairman anticipated him. "Except questions of order, no motions can be entertained," he declared.

The senator stated that he wished to raise a point of order. "Is the count of the electoral vote to proceed under menace?" he shouted. "Shall members be required to perform a Constitutional duty before the Janizaries of General Scott are withdrawn from the hall?"

"The point of order is not sustained," ruled Breckinridge emphatically, and he directed the count to proceed.

Slowly one after another the long sealed envelopes containing the votes of the various states were opened. "Maine for Lincoln" was followed by a slight ripple of applause. "South Carolina for Breckinridge" was lost in an outburst of hand clapping quickly and sternly suppressed by the presiding officer. Then, in a breathless silence and with profound attention

on the part of all present, John C. Breckinridge arose from his seat, standing erect, the most dignified and imposing person in that presence:

"Abraham Lincoln," he announced with a distinctness that carried his mellow voice to the most distant corner of the gallery, "having received a majority of the whole number of electoral votes, is duly elected President of the United States for the four years beginning on the Fourth of March, 1861."⁵²

A few days later the President-elect reached Washington, and his enemies heaped a boisterous, stinging ridicule upon him for yielding to the insistence of his advisers and making a secret night trip from Harrisburg to the capital because of an alleged plot to assassinate him as he came through Baltimore.

The following newspaper comments on this episode were read on the streets of Lexington and other Kentucky towns:

Lincoln said in Philadelphia before Independence Hall that he would rather be assassinated than abandon the principles of the Declaration of Independence, but within a week he ran from the first whisperings of danger as fleetly as ever a naked-legged Highlander pursued a deer upon Scotia's hills. The men who made the Declaration of Independence did not make it good in that way. They fought for their rights. *Lincoln* runs for his. The inference is, they could best maintain its principles by fighting; *Lincoln*, his by running. Let all men use the talent that is given them. . . . Lincoln is said to be a Kentuckian by birth. We now have our doubts on that point. No Kentucky-born man ever would have run all the way from Harrisburg to Washington, with but the ghost of an enemy in sight.⁵³

Stirring Days in Kentucky

MARCH 4, 1861, dawned raw and gusty—an anxious, memorable day in the national capital. A President of the United States was to be inaugurated—possibly for the last time under the government established by the Fathers. Despite low mutterings of the approaching storm, streets and public buildings were profusely decorated, and the Stars and Stripes floated bravely from every flagstaff. The military had always borne a conspicuous part in inaugural ceremonies, but today the alertness of infantry and cavalry, with strategically planted batteries of field artillery and sharpshooters on top of the buildings along Pennsylvania Avenue, gave an atmosphere of ominous gravity to the occasion.

By noontime the wooden platform erected at the east portico of the Capitol was surrounded by a motley and mildly curious assemblage. The stand itself was filled with robed justices of the Supreme Court, senators, representatives, attachés of foreign countries, and prominent leaders of the Republican party.

Presently the long, lank figure of the President-elect appeared on the rotunda, and with Chief Justice Taney and the clerk of the Supreme Court walked slowly down the center aisle to the front of the platform. He was visibly self-conscious in a rather tight-fitting black broadcloth suit, and he held a gold-headed cane stiffly in his left hand. Taking the manuscript of the inaugural address from his breast pocket, he laid it with the cane on a little rickety table. As he glanced about for a more suitable place to put his hat, the short, sturdy arm of Stephen A. Douglas reached forward and relieved him of it. Then, while Lincoln delivered one of the masterpieces of English prose, the Little Giant sat and listened attentively, nodding his shaggy head now and then with approval, holding "Old Abe's" tall, shiny new hat in his lap all the while.¹

That evening Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln attended the Inaugural Ball, and the Lexington newspapers published vivid descriptions of the presidential couple at this function.

It is eleven o'clock [said the *Statesman*]. The orchestra has struck up "Hail to the Chief" and all eyes are turned to the main entrance. He comes (the chief) with the Mayor on his right and a stout man, who looks like a Pennsylvania iron manufacturer, on his left, and with these conductors, Old Abe walks down the hall between the lines of the assemblage, very much like a man in a dream. One lady observes: "Old Abe, as I live, is tipsy. Look at that funny smile." But Old Abe was simply fatigued, and perhaps a little bit distracted with the bewildering events of the last twenty-four hours.²

The far more flattering reference to Mrs. Lincoln would have delighted the heart of Mme. Mentelle, had Mary's old teacher lived six months longer.³

Mrs. Lincoln [continued the account], who followed in his wake, on the arms of the self-possessed Senator Douglas, is still more self-possessed, and has, evidently, with more readiness adapted herself than her taller half to the exalted station in which she has been so strangely advanced from the simple social life of the little inland

capital of Illinois. Women learn such things much faster than men. Mrs. L. shows us in her choice of blue on this occasion, as the color which suits her fair complexion best, that she is no stranger to the beautiful science of the toilet. She dresses tastefully. She seems to feel that her station is as high as that of any of the queens of the earth, and yet she does not with all her dignity, mingle any sign of hauteur.⁴

With the ordeal of the inaugural ceremonies over, Lincoln turned to the task "greater," as he said, "than that which rested upon Washington."⁵ Day after day the corridors leading to the executive offices were choked with a surging tide of office seekers that beat relentlessly upon the gaunt, gloomy man who sat at the big walnut desk beneath a cracked oil painting of doughty, imperious Andrew Jackson.

Henry Clay's son Thomas, a stanch Union man, interviewed Lincoln and next day recommended the appointment of Hiram Shaw of Lexington and William V. Wolfe of Louisville as army paymasters. Lincoln wrote on the back of Clay's letter: "For the sake of Kentucky and the memory of Henry Clay I would like these appointments to be made as soon as practicable."⁶

Kentuckians especially besieged the White House in droves on one pretext or another. The Washington newspapers announced the presence of "100 Todds and all wanting office." Young, ebullient Sam Suddarth, who had been a delegate from Kentucky to the convention that had nominated Bell and Everett, wrote back home a jocular account of his trip to Washington and, in doing so, drew the most vivid description of the Lincoln of Civil War years ever recorded by a Kentuckian.

He and two friends from Frankfort, Kentucky, who felt that they had claims on the new government, spent the first night of their journey at the Burnet House in Cincinnati. They "left next morning & that day passed through Ohio to Pittsburgh—got there about dark, but the train only stopped ten minutes." Upon arrival, wrote Suddarth,

I felt a little dry, and knowing I had but 10 minutes to go on, I struck out in search of a *5 cent house*. I soon found it—*green doors* you know. In I went, called out the liquor & drank and gave the keeper a dime, he commenced very slowly to hunt up the change. I soon saw his game that he would delay finding the change until the cars starting would force me to leave without it. He kept fumbling for the change—the whistle sounded—what must be done! Must I be left or lose my five cents? Neither! I snatched up the bottle and took another *pigdriver*, told him he needn't mind; and with a loud Ky. laugh jumped aboard and sped away feeling none the worse of it.

When they reached Washington, Suddarth and his companions went to the Executive Mansion and announced themselves to Lincoln's secretary as "some Gentlemen from Ky. who desired to see Mr. president on business." Soon they were ushered into his office.

Mr. Lincoln shook us cordially by the hand [said Suddarth], and received us in so natural and unostentatious a manner, and with that kind of unaffected, plain and native urbanity, as to dispel all embarrassment and cause us to feel entirely easy.

His conversational powers are fine—and his custom of interspersing his conversation with incidents, anecdotes and witticisms are well calculated to impress his hearers with the kindheartedness of the man. And they are so adroitly and delicately mingled in the thread of his discourse that one hardly notices the digression. His language is good, though not select. Yet very *strong*, *pointed* and *forcible*, though never harsh. His sentences exceedingly short though full and *complete*. Whatever may be said of some of his political notions, history will record him as one of the most remarkable men of modern times. He is dignified in his manners and address, without austerity. Self poised and clear in his perceptions.⁷

However, there were others farther south who sharply disagreed with Suddarth about Lincoln. The Louisville *Daily Courier* of March 23, 1861, widely circulated in the Bluegrass, carried on its front page the following letter—omitting signature—which its editor said he had received from a prominent member of Congress.

Willard Hotel
Washington
March 1, 1861

I was called here to vote in the House and will return to Richmond tomorrow. The Republican party is utterly demoralized, disrupted and broken up. Cameron and Chase, Weed and Greely can never affiliate. Lincoln is a cross between a sand-hill crane and an Andalusian Jackass. He is, by all odds, the weakest man who has ever been elected—worse than Taylor and he was bad enough. . . . I was sent for by him. I speak what I know. He is vain, weak, puerile, hypocritical, without manners, without social grace, and as he talks to you, punches his fists under your ribs. He swears equal to Uncle Toby, and in every particular, morally and mentally, I have lost all respect for him. He is surrounded by a set of toad eaters and bottle-throwers, and did not know what the Adams amendment was until I told him. In addition to this, I am completely satisfied he is an Abolitionist of the Lovejoy and Sumner type. Such is your God; Oh! Israel!

Late in March, Mary's cousin, Dr. Lyman Beecher Todd, arrived in Washington seeking appointment as postmaster at Lexington. Though Judge Robertson, Cassius M. Clay, and other friends of the President urged the claims of another applicant, Todd got the job without much effort. On the day he left for home, while Mary waited downstairs with the carriage to take him to the train, Todd went in to say good-by to the President.

"Doctor," said Lincoln with a warm parting handshake, "I wish you would see that the Lexington papers are sent here to the White House. The *Observer* has been coming to our home ever since Mary and I were married and I reckon there's no better weather-cock for Kentucky politics just now."⁸

The Lexington newspapers were as divided on the burning question of the hour as were their readers. The *Observer* called its contemporary, the *Statesman*, a "disunion paper, open and avowed," and was in turn sneeringly dubbed by it a "Lincoln administration organ, a coercion, subjugation paper." The

Observer had found Lincoln's inaugural address "temperate, peaceful and national," but the *Statesman* declared that the people of the Bluegrass regarded it as "radical, sectional and abhorrent. . . . Lincoln's silly speeches, his ill-timed jocularity and his pusillanimous evasion of responsibility and vulgar pettifoggery," declared that secessionist organ, "have no parallel in history, save the crazy capers of Caligula, or in the effeminate buffoonery of Henry of Valois."⁹

The Reverend Mr. Pratt had been greatly disturbed about the local situation since the firing on Fort Sumter. Next day he wrote in his diary:

News reached us that war had commenced between the Federal and Confederate troops at Ft. Sumter in the harbor of South Carolina. Our hearts are filled with sadness and great gloom in the community. There are many Secessionists that I have no doubt rejoice at it, for its effect to array the whole south to a united Confederacy against the north, but the majority of people in Ky. are union men & it is distressing to us to see sections of our nation thus arrayed in warlike hostility & that blood has commenced to flow. What will the end be? The Lord only knows. I have prayed & so have thousands of others for the preservation of the union. But Jehovah reigns & we know not what will be his judgments or his mercies.¹⁰

Hundreds of young army officers were resigning their commissions to join the Confederacy, and President Lincoln, casting about for material to fill these vacancies, sent for his brother-in-law, Ben Hardin Helm. Young Helm was a graduate of West Point, the son of a former governor of Kentucky, a stanch Democrat, and the husband of "Little Sister" Emilie Todd. Upon his arrival in Washington, Lincoln offered his kinsman a commission in the United States Army. "Emilie will be a belle at the White House receptions and we will be so proud of her," urged Mary, "and we need handsome, scholarly, dignified young men like yourself to ornament our army."

"You have been kind and generous to me beyond anything I have known," Helm told the President. "I have no claim

on you for I opposed your candidacy and did what I could for the election of another, but with no unkindly feelings toward you." He was silent for a moment. "I wish I could see my way—I will try to do what is right," he said thoughtfully. "You will have my answer in a few days."¹¹

During the remainder of the week Lincoln's young brother-in-law wrestled mightily with fate. He saw many of his old comrades of West Point days and had a long talk with Colonel Robert E. Lee, who had just sent in his resignation to the secretary of war. But he was still undecided as he left the White House for Kentucky.

"Ben," said Lincoln, handing Helm an envelope which contained a major's commission, "here is something for you. Think it over for yourself and let me know what you will do."

"Good-by," said Mary, sending a kiss for Emilie, "we hope very soon to see you both in Washington."¹²

The two men lingeringly clasped hands, and then Helm walked slowly down the stairs and out to meet the Yankee bullet that awaited him on the distant gory battlefield of Chickamauga.

Other Lexington friends called at the White House during these early days. The visits of Senator John C. Breckinridge were always occasions for caustic badinage between Mary and the friend of her childhood.

"Cousin Lizzie," said Breckinridge teasingly one evening to Mary's cousin, Mrs. Grimsley, "I would not like you to be disappointed in your expected stay at the White House, so I will now invite you to remain here as a guest, when the Confederacy takes possession."

"We will be only too happy to entertain her until that time, Senator," quickly replied Mrs. Lincoln with lofty sarcasm.¹³

The middle of April, 1861, found Washington feverish with anxiety. The Stars and Stripes had been hauled down from the shattered ramparts of Fort Sumter. Virginia had seceded. Riots were imminent at Baltimore. Lincoln had issued

a call for 75,000 volunteers. It was rumored that Harpers Ferry had fallen and that a large force of Confederate troops was marching on Washington. Alarmists crowded the corridors of the Executive Mansion, striving to reach the President with lurid warnings of a mob that was about to storm the White House and carry him off across the Potomac.

Except for a company of regulars from Minnesota and a small detachment of unarmed Pennsylvania volunteers, Washington lay undefended from treason within and assault from without. In a frantic effort to make every possible show of military force, the government announced that arms would gladly be furnished to all patriotic citizens who offered their service in defense of the city. Throughout these perilous days and sleepless nights Lincoln bore the terrible suspense with outward calm, but some of the weight must have been lifted from his heavy heart by the sight that met his eyes as he drove out of the White House grounds on the afternoon of April 18.

Up Pennsylvania Avenue came the tramp of marching feet. Swinging around the corner of the Treasury was a column of more than two hundred men, young, vigorous, upstanding chaps. They were without uniforms and there was no rhythm in their step, but their belts bulged with cartridges, and each man carried a new untarnished musket on his shoulder. At the head of the motley company, with long easy strides marched a tall, erect, sinewy individual of robust middle age, whose thick dark hair was turning slightly gray above the temples. With a big cavalry saber buckled about his waist and a wicked-looking, horn-handle knife strapped across his broad chest, he seemed in buoyant spirits at the prospects of approaching conflict. Lincoln did not need to be told that this jaunty crusader was Cash Clay of Kentucky, who had hastily organized a band of rollicking young adventurers called the "Clay Battalion," that was now on its way to the defense of the navy yard.¹⁴ When in a few days regular military enforcements began to arrive in Washington and the immediate peril was over, the

President issued an order thanking Clay for his services. Calling him to the White House, Lincoln presented him with a Colt's revolver "as a testimonial of his regards."¹⁵

In this interview Clay found the President deeply anxious about Kentucky.¹⁶ The Lexington newspapers that came twice a week reflected the gravity of the situation along this most important border line of the South. The fall of Fort Sumter had been greeted by the wildest rejoicing from the young men of the Bluegrass. A week later an armed company of volunteers from Cynthiana, with the Confederate flag flying, had passed through Lexington amid cheers for "Jeff Davis and Beauregard." John Hunt Morgan, captain of the Lexington Rifles, had wired Jefferson Davis: "Twenty thousand men can be raised to defend Southern liberty against Northern conquest. Do you want them?"

His brother, Dick Morgan, was "manufacturing a most beautiful and durable grey jean cloth expressly for the State Guard uniform." The advertisement stated significantly that the jean was of the "right color."¹⁷

The members of the Todd family with but two exceptions were warmly supporting the new Confederacy. Mrs. Lincoln's oldest brother Levi, now almost an invalid, was for the Union, as was also her half sister, Margaret Kellogg.¹⁸ But her youngest brother George and three half brothers—Samuel, David, and Alexander—had already joined the "rebel Army," while her half sisters—Emilie Helm, Martha White, and Elodie Dawson—were the wives of Confederate officers.

"When the Lincoln Administration inaugurated Civil War the people of Kentucky, if we may judge by the feeling in Lexington, by one spontaneous movement have rallied in unbroken columns to the side of their Southern brethren," said the *Statesman*, referring to Lincoln as the "miserable imbecil that now disgraces the Presidential chair."¹⁹

John C. Breckinridge in an address to the citizens of Lexington on April 18 had declared that the "only means by which

a general civil war can be prevented is to confront Mr. Lincoln with fifteen united compact states to warn him that his unholy war is to be waged against 13,000,000 of freemen and fifteen sovereign states.”²⁰

“I joined the Home Guards on Friday,” wrote the Reverend Mr. Pratt on April 28, “& we elected Dr. E. Dudley as our Captain, near 200 of the citizens enrolled their names. In these times of War & confusion it becomes necessary to defend our homes.”

James B. Clay, the son of Henry Clay, had espoused “a united South,” while Robert J. Breckinridge, Jr., was organizing a military company for service under the Stars and Bars. Captain Morgan had a “most beautiful Confederate States Flag afloat over his woollen factory,” and “other flags of similar character” were being “raised throughout the city.”²¹ “Lincoln has been drunk ever since his inauguration,” reported the *Statesman*, “only going out at night in disguise to escape assassination.”²²

For several hours Cash Clay and the President discussed the border situation in all its aspects. Clay expressed the conviction that such men as Dr. Breckinridge, General Leslie Combs, Judge William C. Goodloe, Benjamin Gratz, and Judge Richard A. Buckner would never allow Kentucky to secede. He pointed out that these stalwart champions of the federal government were fortunately located in the heart of the region which must furnish the impetus for an alliance with the Confederacy. Lincoln was much encouraged by this interview with Clay, but an event shortly occurred which dealt a serious blow to the Union cause in the Bluegrass.

At two o'clock on the morning of May 24, 1861, under a brilliant moon, Colonel Elmer Ellsworth landed his famous regiment of Zouaves at Alexandria, Virginia, the first Union troops to invade the Old Dominion. A small detachment of rebel cavalry was captured, and the town was soon occupied, pickets were posted, and the soldiers were quartered, when

Colonel Ellsworth noticed a Confederate flag hoisted over the principal hotel, called the Marshall House.

"Whose flag is that flying over this house?" demanded the colonel as he entered the lobby. Receiving an evasive answer, he dashed up the stairs with several soldiers at his heels, mounted to the roof, cut the halyards, and started down with the flag under his arm. As he reached the second landing, a door swung open; the owner of the premises, James T. Jackson, sprang out and discharged both barrels of a shotgun into Colonel Ellsworth's breast, killing him instantly. A moment later Jackson's body was dragged down the stairs, impaled upon the bayonets of Ellsworth's infuriated comrades. The first blood of the Civil War had been shed on secession soil.

The death of Colonel Ellsworth was Lincoln's first sorrow in the great conflict.²³ Having been virtually a member of the President's household, the young soldier's mutilated body was brought back to Washington and buried from the East Room of the White House. But in Kentucky tears were shed only for his slayer, who was the youngest brother of Dr. John Jackson of Lexington. Indignation ran high at the news of his death. Those who favored secession now cited the tragedy as an example of "Lincoln's despotism" and urged Dr. Jackson's many friends to avenge the "murder" of his brother by shouldering arms for the South.

"We rejoice in the death of Ellsworth and only regret that every man who followed him did not share the same fate," exclaimed the *Statesman*. "Mr. Jackson was too noble a man to fall a victim to the infamous thieves of Ellsworth's regiment. . . . We but express the heartfelt sympathy of every true Southern man in this community, when we tender to our fellow citizen our sincere condolence."²⁴

On the very day of Colonel Ellsworth's death the Kentucky legislature, having proclaimed neutrality, with a Senate resolution "That Kentucky will not sever her relation with the National government," adjourned sine die. Since January it had remained in almost continuous session. Governor Magoffin

and his henchmen had made determined efforts to force a resolution of secession, but throughout the protracted struggle they had been thwarted at every turn by Robert J. Breckinridge and his little band of loyal followers from the Bluegrass. Joshua Speed and his brother James from Louisville had rendered invaluable aid, but the burden of leadership had fallen upon the grizzled, pugnacious foe of rebellion, Dr. Breckinridge.

Since his fast day sermon on January 4, through the press and from the platform Breckinridge had wielded a mighty influence for the preservation of the Union and against the secession of his beloved state. His paper, the *Quarterly Review*, breathing the strongest sentiments of loyalty to the Lincoln administration, went regularly into thousands of homes in Kentucky, Missouri, and Maryland. And now that the legislature had adjourned with Kentucky still in the Union, the Doctor was swamped by congratulations from many parts of the country.²⁵

Not a few correspondents, however, took him to task for his hostility to the Confederacy. "You have done more than anyone else to bring about the present condition of affairs in your State," complained a citizen of Carthage, Tennessee. "Cut loose from the Bogus government at Washington, and let us build up a model government in the Sunny South."²⁶

For several months following Lincoln's election Kentucky had drifted steadily toward secession. Now the tide seemed to have turned, and the President hastened to extend every possible aid to the embattled Unionists of his native state. By the first of June Major Anderson, the hero of Fort Sumter, himself a Kentuckian, arrived in the Bluegrass. He carried a special commission which authorized him to recruit as many volunteer regiments as were willing to enlist in the service of the United States.

Major Anderson found three splendidly equipped military companies in Lexington: the Rifles, the "Chasseurs," and the

Old Infantry. The latter two organizations were for the Union almost to a man, but the Rifles, commanded by the dashing John Hunt Morgan, leaned strongly toward the South.

Captain G. L. Postlethwaite and Jesse Bayles, Robert S. Todd's old political ally and Lincoln's personal friend, were raising four companies of volunteers, who by the middle of June were parading in "blue flannels" on Cheapside.

Major Anderson's first report to the President on conditions in central Kentucky was undoubtedly encouraging. In Lexington and Fayette County the underlying loyalty of the people was beginning to assert itself with cohesive force, much to the chagrin of the secession press.

On June 14 the Henry Clay monument was completed in the Lexington cemetery. "When the statue was placed upon the capstone," quoted the *Statesman* from the *Observer*, "a flagstaff being fastened to the extended right hand of the figure, the Stars and Stripes were unfurled amid hearty cheers from the spectators beneath." Were that great man now living," added the *Statesman* in disgust, "we solemnly believe he would trample upon that emblem of a perverted government and a violated constitution."²⁷

Lexington was beginning to receive her share of the five thousand "Lincoln guns" that had been shipped to Louisville for distribution to loyal citizens throughout Kentucky, and old and young were being secretly taught the manual of arms.

"We have in each ward four companies of Union men," wrote David Sayre, seventy-four years of age, "but we are only half armed. My back office is quite an armory, having received guns and revolvers from Louisville and Cincinnati last week wherewith to arm our gallant followers, who are unable to incur the expense of procuring weapons."²⁸

Meanwhile, the President was keeping a cautious eye on the situation in Lexington, as indicated by the following letter: "Executive Mansion. July 29, 1861. Gentlemen of the Kentucky delegation, who are for the Union—I somewhat wish to authorize my friend Jesse Bayles to raise a Kentucky Regiment;

but I do not wish to do it without your consent. If you consent, please write so, at the bottom of this. Yours truly A. Lincoln.”²⁹ And a week later he mildly urged the proposition again in a postscript: “I repeat, I would like for Col. Bayles to raise a Regiment of Cavalry, whenever the Union men of Kentucky, desire, or consent to it. Aug. 5, 1861. A. Lincoln.”

The Fourth of July, 1861, gave the Unionists of the Bluegrass an opportunity to demonstrate their strength, and they made the most of it by a mammoth celebration at Lexington. More than twenty thousand people were in town that day. The monument to Henry Clay was formally dedicated, the four companies of Home Guards paraded, and John Harlan delivered a “grand oration” at the fair grounds.³⁰ The enthusiasm of the occasion gave a decisive impetus to the candidacy of Judge Richard A. Buckner, who was seeking re-election to the legislature against James B. Clay, an avowed disunionist. Buckner had been a faithful supporter of the Lincoln government at the recent session and had incurred the bitter enmity of those who would array Kentucky with the South. “It cannot be truthfully denied,” said the *Statesman*, “that as Legislator he was behind none other in the House in giving to Kentucky her present apparent position of cordial support of the Lincoln administration.”³¹

While Lexington was celebrating Independence Day, President Lincoln delivered his first message to the Thirty-Seventh Congress assembled in special session. He reviewed the outbreak of rebellion, the efforts of the government to maintain its territorial integrity, the assault on Fort Sumter, his call for volunteers, and the present state of the country. The latter part of the message was devoted to an extensive analysis of the “State Sovereignty” doctrine under which the South claimed the constitutional right to withdraw from the Union. Tracing the political history of the nation from the days of colonial dependence, he showed that none of the states except Texas ever was a sovereignty and that even she had surrendered this status on coming into the Union.³²

HEADQUARTERS

Department, No. 2,

LEXINGTON, OCTOBER 3d, 1862.

GENERAL ORDERS No. 182.

The General Commanding had hoped that the Currency of the Confederate States would have been taken at its par value, and that no effort would be made to depreciate it. He regrets to find that he has been disappointed, and that the Order heretofore issued has been misunderstood. Confederate Money has been refused by some, and by others exorbitant rates have been demanded.

The payment by the Government for supplies in Confederate money carries with it the obligation to protect its circulation. All efforts to discredit it must cease.

To avoid any further misunderstanding, it is ordered that the currency of the Confederate States be taken at its par value in all transactions whatever, public or private.

The refusal to take it, or the exaction of exorbitant rates, will be treated as a military offence, and punished accordingly.

By command of Gen. BRAXTON BRAGG.

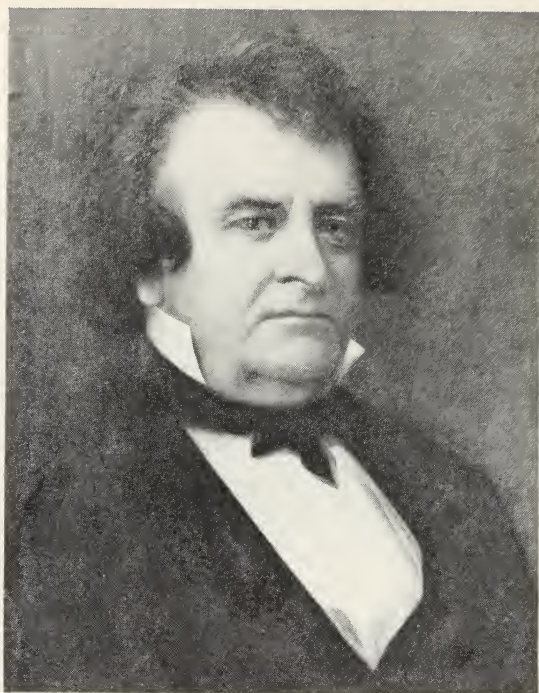
GEORGE WM. BRENT,

Chief of Staff & A. A. G.

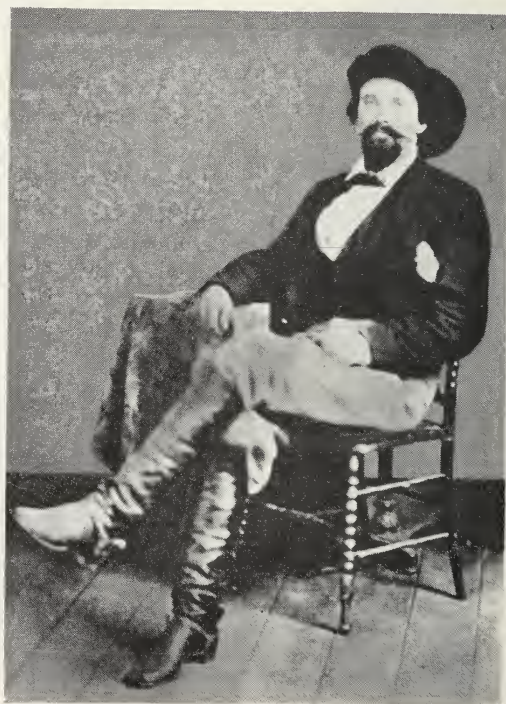
HANDBILL ORDERING ACCEPTANCE OF CONFEDERATE MONEY IN
LEXINGTON. *Original in Coleman Collection*



YANKEES IN THE COURTHOUSE YARD



PORTRAIT OF JUDGE
 GEORGE ROBERTSON
*Courtesy of Mrs.
 Wallace Muir*



GENERAL JOHN HUNT
 MORGAN

The message was a convincing document, sound, firm, calm, and dignified in tone. Throughout the North it was received with approbation, and the loyal element of the Border States greeted it with an applause that brought Dr. Breckinridge strongly into the limelight. The President had used in his message the state sovereignty argument of the Doctor's fast day sermon at Lexington, and friends from many parts of the country wrote him letters of warm congratulations upon Lincoln's recent endorsement of his views.

"Ask your Pa (for I forgot to speak of it in my letter to him) if he noticed that President Lincoln in his late message copied some of the very language which he used in his first article on the state of the country?" wrote R. W. Landis from St. Louis. "He did, & I tell you I felt proud & mentioned it to the people here."³³

It was reported that you were in Washington [wrote D. R. Happersett to Breckinridge], and I mentioned it to the President, with whom I have become pretty well acquainted. He asked me with a good deal of earnestness whether I had seen you and intimated that he hardly supposed that you had been in the city without letting him know it. He evidently wanted to see you, and spoke in the highest terms of you. I regret that you did not visit Washington.

I alluded to your article on the state of our country as being entirely the most satisfactory and conclusive on that subject of all that had been written. He seemed familiar with it as I supposed he was from his message to Congress. That whole argument about state sovereignty &c was yours. He is your warm friend, and I am sure that you are his in the vigorous prosecution of this war. The truth is, we are looking to you for the support of Kentucky to the general government more than to any living man. May God strengthen and support you in your noble efforts in this our country's struggle. Keep Kentucky right and we will take care of Missouri and re-establish our supremacy over the whole land after a little while.³⁴

Four weeks after Lexington's Fourth of July celebration, Judge Buckner defeated James B. Clay for the legislature by an overwhelming majority, and when the General Assembly convened at Frankfort in September, the loyalty of that body

was demonstrated by the selection of the Lexington jurist for speaker of the House. "The Legislature," observed the *Statesman*, "dissipates the last pretense of neutrality, and places Kentucky so far as the Legislature can do, in attitude of hostility to the South."³⁵

On Thursday evening, September 19, 1861, the first Union troops, the Fourteenth Ohio, fifteen hundred strong, arrived in Lexington and went into camp at the fair grounds. A few days later 3,500 more marched into town. "A fine looking body of men," observed the Reverend Mr. Pratt, "well dressed and provisioned. I mingled freely among them & was interested in their talk, they seemed to be quiet & under good military discipline. A striking fact—only 40 voted for Lincoln."³⁶

The soldiers, however, had scarcely pitched their tents before sharp clashes began to occur with local citizens who were infuriated by the sight of blue jackets. The Phoenix Hotel, where John C. Breckinridge boarded, had long been headquarters for southern sympathizers, and trouble started here immediately. A squad of "Yankees" passing along the street were fired upon, as they claimed, from an upstairs window, and in a few minutes the building was surrounded by a battalion of infantry, a troop of cavalry, and several pieces of field artillery. The place was then thoroughly searched from top to bottom, but the offender had escaped, and the best that Captain Buford could do was to warn the proprietor that if an incident occurred again, he would burn the old landmark to the ground.³⁷

On the following Sunday morning the town was thrown into another uproar by the wounding of two men as they passed one of the camps in a buggy shouting: "Hooray for Jeff Davis." And on Tuesday a detachment of cavalry clattered up to the printing office of the *Statesman* and notified the vitriolic editor that his newspaper was indefinitely suspended.³⁸

For the preceding day the Reverend Mr. Pratt wrote: "I saw J. B. Clay & 16 other political prisoners brought from

Camp Robinson under a strong military guard & sent immediately to Louisville. I felt sad at the spectacle, to see the son of the distinguished statesman in durance vile, brought through his native city, not permitted to visit his family or to speak to anyone, he looked bad, but he had no business to defy his state or the military or to go to join the enemy."

Pratt's strong stand for the Union had already begun to divide his congregation, as he discovered when he called on a sick member. "Visited Bro. Taylor, he was hurt with me because I shook hands with Federal soldiers & invited some officers to dine with me. He got on the War & worked himself up to such a fever of excitement, I was afraid he would go into spasms."³⁹

For weeks it had been rumored that Captain John Hunt Morgan was about to march his Lexington Rifles southward, and when the Union troops arrived, Morgan had good reason to fear that his company would be speedily disarmed. So on Friday night, September 20, 1861, while his men tramped heavily over the armory floor to avert suspicion, a picked guard slipped out of the city with the company's guns packed in two wagons filled with hay. Next evening Captain Morgan and fifty of the finest youngsters of the Bluegrass quietly assembled at the edge of town and galloped off down the Versailles Pike in the twilight for the Confederate rendezvous on the Green River.⁴⁰

Lexington was now under military rule and would remain so for many months. With batteries of artillery parked on Cheapside, squads of Yankees camped in the courthouse yard, and the Stars and Stripes fluttering from a dozen flagstaffs, it was difficult to realize that scarcely six months had passed since Dr. Breckinridge had been the only citizen of the town who dared to denounce secession and pledge loyalty to his government in a public speech.

No man from Baltimore to St. Louis was now quite so influential in the Border States as was the Doctor. The sound

common sense, fiery eloquence, and lofty patriotism of his speeches and articles in the *Review* had quickened many faltering hearts during the dark, chaotic months. And as the first tragic year of the Civil War drew to a close, the brilliant Lexingtonian stood high in the confidence and gratitude of Abraham Lincoln.

"I hear it repeated that there is a probability of your being called at this perilous crisis to take part in the official management of our national interests," wrote Samuel J. Baird of New Jersey. "I trust it may be so & that if any overtures on the subject should be made to you, you will not decline."⁴¹

Dr. L. B. Todd, who had just returned from Washington, also dropped a note to Dr. Breckinridge at "Braedalbane," his country seat: "I am perfectly satisfied, yes *I feel assured* that there must *very shortly* be a vacancy in the Cabinet—that secretary Cameron must be removed and that a good Providence indicates *yourself* as the most suitable, worthy and exactly the Statesman and Patriot to become his successor."⁴²

But while the Doctor received the acclaim of his countrymen, the bright star of his nephew's fame was slipping into the shadows of a long eclipse. Handsome, genial, eloquent, with a personality of singular sweetness and charm, the most imposing figure on horseback in all Kentucky, John C. Breckinridge had been congressman, senator, Vice-President, and the nominee of his party for the highest office in the nation before he was forty years of age. Reared like Jefferson Davis and Alexander Stephens in a school of statesmanship that taught first allegiance to the principles of local sovereignty, he now abandoned one of the most brilliant careers in American politics to answer the call of duty as he understood it. But before he put on the uniform of a Confederate major general, Breckinridge came back to Kentucky and returned his commission as United States senator in a touching address to the electorate of his state.⁴³

His embittered colleagues at Washington, however, would not have it so. There must be a permanent record of Breckin-

ridge's "infamy." And on December 4, 1861, the following resolution was unanimously adopted by the Senate: "Whereas John C. Breckinridge, a member of this body from the state of Kentucky has joined the enemies of his country, and is now in arms against his country he had sworn to support: Therefore, *Resolved* that John C. Breckinridge, the traitor, be and he is hereby expelled from the Senate."⁴⁴

On January 4, 1862, the Unionists elected a full city ticket in Lexington, and Dr. Breckinridge, Postmaster Todd, Benjamin Gratz, and other loyal citizens started a fund for the "special benefit of families of those who volunteered in defense of our state; of the union of the United States, and for the preservation of the laws and constitution."

The Doctor had incurred by this time the abiding hatred of all secessionists. Threats were being made to kidnap his young son John, and while the old theologian issued notice that if any harm came to the boy, he "would hold every Secessionist responsible," he was attacked from another quarter. Realizing the tremendous influence of the *Review* throughout the Border States,⁴⁵ his enemies now sought to suppress its further appearance, and the printing establishment that published the paper not only declined to issue it again but destroyed the mailing list of subscribers.

However, upon the exposure of the plot, financial aid and new subscriptions poured in from all over the country, to the utter discomfiture of the conspirators.⁴⁶ "I cannot express to you my regret that one of my family should attempt the destruction of that valuable and Patriotic *Review*, so magnanimously devoted to the support of the Government," wrote Dr. Todd, "but in place of him, I hereby pledge to you every effort I am able to make, every influence I can possibly exert in placing upon a broader basis and for a wider circulation the excellent *Review*."⁴⁷

The assaults on his paper only served to spur Dr. Breckinridge to greater effort. Now that the danger of secession seemed past in Kentucky, he accepted an invitation from the citizens

of Cincinnati to aid them in their drive for enlistments, and on Tuesday evening, May 20, 1862, he delivered an address on the "state of the country" to an audience that rocked the Opera House with wild applause.

"Mr. Breckinridge," said the Cincinnati newspapers, "is a tall gentleman, apparently sixty years of age or upward, wearing a beard which, upon the immediate side of each cheek is of a dark iron-gray color, and directly beneath his chin it is snowy white. . . . The address fully convinced his hearers of his wonderful powers, being clothed in eloquent language, and delivered in a voice of distinct intonation heard in every part of the house."⁴⁸

A few days later the Doctor hurried back to Lexington and assumed the burden of a task by which he hoped to discourage further Confederate enlistments in the Bluegrass. Besides his nephew and a son-in-law, two of his sons, the joy and pride of his declining years, were wearing the gray somewhere in Dixie, and though it wrung his heart like Abraham of old, he would not swerve from the path of duty, not even for the sake of his own flesh and blood.

Following a consultation with Judge William C. Goodloe a special session of the Fayette Circuit Court was convened, after Lincoln's cousin, County Judge Charles D. Carr, had been threatened with arrest before he would open the courthouse. A grand jury was quickly impaneled and Foreman Benjamin Gratz reported indictments for treason against John Hunt Morgan, John C. Breckinridge, William C. Preston, James B. Clay, and thirty other young men of Fayette County—and the names of Robert J. Breckinridge, Jr., and W. C. P. Breckinridge, the Doctor's boys, were near the top of the list.⁴⁹

Benjamin Gratz was one of the staunchest Union men in Kentucky, but like many others he had "rebel" friends and relatives who now and then sought his aid and protection. When he wired Lincoln about Mrs. Susan Shelby Grigsby, who wanted to stay at his home to be near her wounded husband of the Confederate Sixth Kentucky Cavalry, the President wired

back authority for allowing her to remain at his house so long as he chose "to be responsible for what she may do."⁵⁰

The losses of the battlefield had as yet scarcely touched the Bluegrass, and except for the fact that business houses closed at four o'clock in the afternoon to give the citizens an opportunity to drill, the routine of the city went on very much as usual—a trifle gayer, perhaps, because of the presence of so many young and fascinating Yankee officers. General Orlando B. Wilcox had established headquarters in a large colonial mansion just across the street from where Mary Todd had gone to school to Dr. Ward, and blue uniforms, gold epaulets, red sashes, and clanking sabers lent a martial embellishment to parties, balls, and the brilliant occasion when the "elite of Lexington theater-goers were thrilled by the first appearance of the greatest Tragedian of the Age, Mr. John Wilkes Booth," who appeared at the Opera House as the Duke of Gloucester in *Richard III* and as Charles De Moor in "Schiller's tragic play, *The Robbers*."⁵¹

The gallant blades of the North, however, were not welcome everywhere in Lexington, and in many homes even the window shades were drawn at the sight of them. "Lexington is a Union city, if you confine the expression of sentiment to the sensible citizens thereof," reported a local correspondent to the Cincinnati *Daily Commercial*, "but give a vote to every love-lorn lass of sweet sixteen, whose dearest idol is seeking his rights amid the chaos of butternut coats and you will find a majority the wrong way." But the writer complimented "Lexington ladies of the secession persuasion" on their demeanor toward the Union soldiers, saying that "they do not turn up their noses and otherwise insult them as do the petticoated vulgarians of Nashville, Memphis, and New Orleans. Soldiers pass them in the street and meet them in the stores without receiving the least cause for offence." All of which he attributed to the "superior education and good breeding of Kentucky women."⁵²

While it was doubtless true that Lexington women of southern sympathies usually held their peace, it was possible, nevertheless, to provoke some of them into bitter retort, and Mary Lincoln's stepmother, at least on occasion, was a conspicuous example.

On Saturday morning, June 7, 1862, Mrs. Todd, then visiting her daughter Margaret in Cincinnati, attended an exhibition of the Horticultural Society with several of Mrs. Kellogg's friends. In the course of conversation someone referred to the activities of General John Hunt Morgan near Tompkinsville, Kentucky. At this moment "an elderly gentleman" joined the group, and assuming that all present were Unionists, he proceeded to denounce the "notorious Morgan" and dwelt vigorously upon the public's intense "abhorrence of his villainies." This philippic after a while became too much even for the quiet, cultured, dignified Mrs. Todd, who had known General Morgan since his early childhood and had just lost her oldest boy Samuel at the Battle of Shiloh.

"I wish there were ten thousand like John Morgan," exclaimed Mrs. Todd "vehemently," to the utter astonishment of the "elderly gentleman," who hastily changed the subject and made his exit at the first opportunity.⁵³

However, the Reverend Mr. Pratt was of the opinion that Lexington was far from being a Union city. When the Elkhorn Baptist Association held a "day of fasting & prayer," Pratt found the meetinghouse full. The chairman

called upon a number to pray but every brother seemed embarrassed & avoided mention of the restoration of the Union, etc. Last of all he called upon me & I joyfully accepted the opportunity. . . . I prayed the Lord to bless the President, the members of his Cabinet, Congress & our Legislature, Governor &c. & also the restoration of the Union. When I had got through, I found that quite a number of Secessionists had either left the house or were leaving, vowing they would never hear me preach or pray again. . . . In starting to leave for home, I found some person had run against my buggy & broke one wheel.⁵⁴

The death of Sam Todd had not only brought sorrow and bitterness to his mother, but it had also inflicted another deep personal wound upon the First Lady in the White House, seared by taunting sarcasms from newspapers of the South, widely and maliciously circulated by the Copperhead press of the North.

Among the many names of those who fell upon the bloody field of Shiloh, while gallantly fighting for the independence of the South [said the *Montgomery Advertiser*], we find that of S. B. Todd, brother of the wife of the Yankee President. If either Lincoln or his wife had shown themselves to be possessed of the ordinary sensibilities of human nature, we should not envy their feelings when they learn of the death of their brother at the hands of the Northern mercenaries. We are aware that Lincoln is profuse in his tears when he deems proper to indulge in such luxuries . . . but we do not believe he will have one tear of regret to shed when the intelligence of the death of the brave Todd reaches him.

Mrs. Lincoln is of such a sympathizing nature that she felt compelled to put on mourning out of respect to the Queen of England . . . but we cannot expect that she will receive the news of the death of her brother with any other feelings than that of indifference. That brother has given his life to beat back the despotism which his own brother-in-law seeks to establish in the South, and his blood will cry from the earth for vengeance, until Lincoln, like his renowned example, Cain, shall utter in tones of bitter anguish, "My punishment is greater than I can bear."⁵⁵

Lincoln still kept in touch with his wife's home town. Early in August he received an elegant silver snuffbox with the following letter:

Ashland near Lexington
4th August 1862

To His Excellency Abraham Lincoln
President of the United States
Dear Sir:

I send you through Adams Express a snuff box, not of much intrinsic value, but which belonged to my late father, whose avowed

sentiment "that he owed a higher allegiance to the Constitution and Government of the United States than to the Constitution and Government of any State" is mine, and whose other noblest sentiment "that he would rather be right than be President" I hope may ever be yours.

My mother now passed 81 years of age, consents for me to send you the snuff box. With Great Respect

Your friend & Obt. Servt.

John M. Clay⁵⁶

This gift was promptly acknowledged:

Executive Mansion,

Washington, August 9, 1862.

Mr. John M. Clay.

My dear Sir:

The snuff-box you sent, with the accompanying note, was received yesterday. Thanks for this *memento* of your great and patriotic father. Thanks also for the assurance that, in these days of dereliction, you remain true to his principles. In the concurrent sentiment of your venerable mother, so long the partner of his bosom and his honors, and lingering now, where he *was*, but for the call to rejoin him where he *is*, I recognize his voice, speaking as it ever spoke, for the Union, the Constitution, and the freedom of mankind.

Your Obt. Servt.

A. Lincoln⁵⁷

Margaret Wickliffe Preston, Mrs. Lincoln's girlhood friend and schoolmate, telegraphed the White House asking for a pass through the Union lines to go south to see her husband, General William C. Preston of the Confederate Army. And the President wired reply:

Washington D. C.,
Aug. 21, 1862.

Mrs. Margaret Preston
Lexington, Ky.

Your despatch to Mrs. L. received yesterday. She is not well. Owing to her early and strong friendship for you, I would gladly oblige you, but I can not absolutely do it. If Gen. Boyle and Hon.

James Guthrie, one or both, in their discretion, see fit to give you the passes, this is my authority to them for doing so.

A. Lincoln⁵⁸

Next day Mrs. Lincoln sent this telegram: "General Boyle, Louisville, Ky. I presume you have received a despatch from Mrs. Preston. If you consistently can, will you not grant her request?"⁵⁹

Early in August, Cassius M. Clay, whom Lincoln had appointed minister to Russia, returned to Washington and accepted a commission from the President as major general of volunteers. Steady reverses to the Army of the Potomac, as Lee with bloody thrusts pushed McClellan back upon Washington, had shrouded the Capital in darkest gloom. With resistance to the draft, dissension in Congress, widespread criticism of the administration, and the utter inability of Union generals to achieve a single decisive victory, the Union cause seemed hopeless.

In an interview with Lincoln, Clay urged the President to proclaim the freedom of all slaves in the seceded states. During his sojourn on the Continent he had devoted much time to the study of European politics. It was evident that the rulers of France, Russia, and England were in sympathy with any movement that would destroy the Republic and anxious for an opportunity to intervene in behalf of the Confederacy. But if the federal government freed the slaves, Clay told the President, autocracy would never dare actively to espouse the cause of the South.

Lincoln listened closely to the emphatic opinions of the impetuous Kentuckian, but said little. Clay, however, was deeply aroused on the subject, and on the evening of August 13, 1862, he delivered at the Odd Fellows' Hall in Washington a fiery speech "which excited the widest comment." In this address he vigorously declared his belief that freedom for the slaves was the only way to avoid foreign intervention. "Fight this war on the principle of common sense!" he exclaimed.

"As for myself, never, so help me God, will I draw a sword to keep the chains upon another fellow-being."⁶⁰

Next morning the Union press severely criticized General Clay for his "intemperate utterances." "He has outstripped himself. He is ahead of Lovejoy. He is neck and neck with Garrison and Phillips," raved the New York *Evening Post*.

But the President sent for Clay. "I have been thinking of what you said to me," said Lincoln, "but I fear if such proclamation of emancipation was made Kentucky would go against us; and we have now as much as we can carry."

"You are mistaken," replied Clay, "the Kentuckians have heard this question discussed by me for a *quarter of a century*; and have all made up their minds. Those who intend to stand by slavery have already joined the Rebel army; and those who remain will stand by the Union at all events. Not a man of intelligence will change his ground."

Lincoln pondered the situation for a few moments. "The Kentucky Legislature is now in session," he said at last. "Go down and see how they stand and report to me."⁶¹

A week later, when Clay arrived in Lexington, he found the city in the wildest disorder and confusion. The long-planned Confederate advance to rescue Kentucky from the "Lincoln tyranny" was well under way. Bragg's gray-clad veterans were pouring through Cumberland Gap, and the infantry of General Kirby Smith, flanked by John Morgan's hard-riding cavalry, was already in sight of the Bluegrass. Mayor Worley had proclaimed the "near approach of an invading foe," and orderlies galloped up and down the streets mobilizing the Home Guards. With characteristic vigor Clay rushed to the aid of General Lew Wallace, who was gathering every available soldier to resist the approaching enemy, but his mission for Lincoln compelled him to leave on the morning of August 27 for Frankfort, where he was scheduled to address the legislature.

On August 30, while Stonewall Jackson was crushing Pope at the second battle of Bull Run, General Kirby Smith's advance guard defeated the Union forces twenty miles east of

Lexington, and all hope of saving the capital of the Bluegrass was abandoned. Bank vaults were hurriedly emptied. Postmaster Todd hustled off the accumulated mail. Government stores were piled up and set on fire, and then with screeching locomotives and the clatter of hoofs the Union troops evacuated the city.

Three days later Kirby Smith's ragged soldiers—hungry, worn out, almost shoeless, but undaunted—marched into Lexington with bands playing and colors flying. And on Thursday morning through streets lined with excited, eager friends waving handkerchiefs and small Confederate flags Morgan and his men came back home. The debonair cavalry leader, in the full uniform of a Confederate colonel, a happy smile upon his mobile, sunburned features, rode at the head of the dusty column. Swinging into Main Street, the daredevil troopers were soon dismounted on Cheapside, where mothers, wives, and sweethearts welcomed them with tears of joy and a warm embrace.⁶²

Lexington was occupied by General Smith's army for six weeks, while her loyal citizens sent frantic messages to President Lincoln and Stanton, the secretary of war. "The loss of Lexington is the loss of the very heart of Kentucky, and leaves the road open to the Ohio river," wired C. P. Morton,⁶³ and next day Thomas H. Clay advised the President: "The Panic still prevails. Lexington and Frankfort in the hands of the Rebels. Unless the state is reenforced with veteran troops, Kentucky will be overrun."⁶⁴

From the very beginning, Lexingtonians had accepted Confederate money with much reluctance—many had refused it altogether. Several weeks later General Bragg found it necessary to issue an order which expressed his disappointment that "Currency of the Confederate states" had been "refused by some, and by others exhorbitant rates have been demanded. All efforts to discredit it must cease. . . . It is ordered that the currency of the Confederate states be taken at its par value in all transactions whatever, public or private. The refusal to

take it, or the exaction of exorbitant rates will be treated as a military offense and punished accordingly.”⁶⁵

On September 13 the *Kentucky Statesman*, burning with revenge for its suppression a year before, resumed publication with a malignant article which it said came from the pen of “a brilliant Southern journalist.”

Abraham Lincoln is a man above the medium height. He passes the six foot mark by an inch or two. He is raw-boned, shamlegaited, bow-legged, knock-kneed, pigeon-toed, slob-sided, a shapeless skeleton in a very tough, very dirty, unwholesome skin. His hair is or rather was black and shaggy; his eyes dark and fireless like a cold grate in winter time. His lips protrude beyond the natural level of the face, but are pale and smeared with tobacco juice. His teeth are filthy.

In our juvenile days we were struck with Virgil's description of the ferryman who rode with the disembodied souls of men over the river of death. Lincoln, if our memory fails us not, must be a near kinsman of that official of the other world. At all events they look alike and if a relationship be claimed when Abraham reaches the ferry he will be able, we doubt not, to go over free of toll.

In the next place his voice is untutored, coarse, harsh—the voice of one who has no intellect and less moral nature. His manners are low in the extreme and when his talk is not obscene it is senseless. In a word Lincoln born and bred a railsplitter, is a railsplitter still. Bottom, the weaver, was not more out of place in the lap of Titania than he on the throne of the ex-republic. And this is the man who, incapable of stronger or higher inspiration than that of revenge, aspires to be master of the South, as he is of the enslaved and slavish North. This is the man who bids armies rise and fight and commands and dismisses generals at will. This is the man who proclaims (as such could only do) the equality of the races, black with white. This is the man who incites servile insurrection, ordains plunder and encourages rapine. This is the man who trembles not at the horrible butchery which Heaven will call him to answer for, yet quakes like an aspen at the approach of peril to his own poor carcass. This is the man in fine who has been selected by the powers to do such dark deeds as the Dark Ages only know, deeds which civilization blushes to record and men in other lands refuse to credit. Kneel down and kiss his royal feet, men of the South!

However, this incredibly false and venomous appraisal of Abraham Lincoln by a so-called "brilliant," though anonymous, "Southern Journalist" was in sharp contrast to the observations of a distinguished philosopher and man of letters whose name was revered in many American households.

In February, 1862, Ralph Waldo Emerson visited Washington for the purpose of delivering a lecture at the Smithsonian Institution. While there, he called at the White House and then wrote in his journal:

The President impressed me more favorably than I had hoped. A frank, sincere, well meaning man, with a lawyer's habit of mind, good, clear statement of his facts; correct enough, not vulgar, as described, but with a sort of boyish cheerfulness, or that kind of jolly good meaning, that our class meetings of Commencement Days show, in telling our old stories over. When he has made his remark he looks up at you with great satisfaction and shows all his white teeth and laughs. When I was introduced to him he said "Oh, Mr. Emerson, I once heard you say in a lecture that a Kentuckian seems to say by his air and manners, 'Here am I, if you don't like me, the worse for you.' " The point of this, of course, is that Lincoln himself is a Kentuckian.⁶⁶

The Confederate invasion, however, was short-lived. By the middle of October, following the bloody battle of Perryville, Bragg withdrew from Kentucky, and on the sixteenth of the month the Fourth Ohio Cavalry rode into Lexington. In a few more days thousands of Union troops were encamped in the courthouse yard, at the racetrack, and on the fair grounds.⁶⁷

Dr. Breckinridge had been deeply chagrined by the enemy's brief occupation of his beloved city. But now that butternut jeans and Confederate flags had disappeared, he gradually recovered his equanimity.

At least, I have the double satisfaction of some little share in the defeat of a wicked and dangerous attack on us; and then of some kind offices to its helpless and deluded victims. It seems to me that people who become traitors, lose in great degree their conscience and their sense. Nearly all these people who made this raid

were natives of this state—large numbers of them of this particular portion of it, and what they incur the frightful risk of making it for, except mere mischief, is inconceivable supposing them to have any sense. The general effect has been to rouse the Union people of the whole state to much greater activity and decision—and to weaken, in many ways, the disloyal party in the state.⁶⁸

Problems of State and In-Law Trouble

ON SEPTEMBER 22, 1862, President Lincoln had issued his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, and in a few weeks runaway slaves began to flock in large numbers to the Union camps about Lexington. Several regiments refused to give them shelter, but others, particularly the Twenty-Second Wisconsin Volunteers, commanded by Colonel William L. Utley, a Wisconsin farmer in civil life, took them in. One of the refugees was a young mulatto girl "about 18 years old of fine appearance." She had been sold by her master for \$1,700 to a man who had arranged to put her in a house of ill fame in Lexington. When her master came to the camp in search of his property, the soldiers hid her, and she was given transportation in a sutler's wagon to Cincinnati.¹

One day in November, Lincoln's old friend, Judge George Robertson, drove up to Colonel Utley's headquarters in his elegant carriage. Introducing himself to the colonel, the Judge informed him that he was the last surviving member of the Congress that had passed the Missouri Compromise, that he was a friend of Lincoln's, and that he had written an essay

against slavery and in favor of emancipation that was then "being eagerly sought after by the President." He further informed Colonel Utley that he was in search of a black boy that had run away from him, and that he understood the little Negro was being harbored by his soldiers.

"I do not permit nigger-hunters to ransack my regiment," said the colonel bluntly. "If you will drive back into town, and return at three o'clock, I will look through the regiment, and if I find such a boy and he is willing to go with you, I pledge you my honor that you shall have him."

At the appointed time Judge Robertson returned. "Have you found the boy?" he inquired.

"I have found a little yellow boy who says he belongs to a man in Lexington who hired him out to a brutal Irishman for fifty dollars a year," replied Colonel Utley. "The Irishman, never having seen him, was dissatisfied, he being so much smaller than he had anticipated for a boy of nineteen, and as his master would not take him back, he declared that he would lick it out of him. He says that the man beat him for anything and for nothing—that he had been to his master many times and told him he could not stand it, and that his master replied: 'Go back, you dog.'"

"He also says that he showed his master his neck, with the skin torn off, where the Irishman had tied a rope around it, and dragged him about; that he had been hired out since he was five years old, his master taking all his wages and now he gave him no protection. He says that he has been beaten, worked and starved until he could endure it no longer and ran away. He lived on black walnuts till the snow came, and he was obliged to seek shelter somewhere. He sought protection from several regiments, but could gain no admission until he came here. Now, sir," said Utley, gazing intently at the Judge from under his battered campaign hat, "is that your boy?"

"He is my nigger," replied Robertson, "but niggers lie."

The little slave was then brought into his master's presence, where he repeated his story and clung steadfastly to it under the Judge's furious cross-examination. An orderly then led

him out of the tent, and Colonel Utley said to the Judge that he had better go home without the boy, intimating that some of his men might handle him roughly if the purpose of his visit became known to the regiment.

Shaking with anger, Robertson continued to argue the case and denounced the Twenty-Second Wisconsin as a "gang of nigger-stealers."

"You talk about nigger-stealing," replied Utley, "you who riot in idleness, and who live on the sweat and blood of such little creatures as that!"

"If that is the way you talk and feel the Union can never be saved. You must give up our property," retorted the Judge, brandishing his cane.

"Union men!" exclaimed the colonel. "I have not seen half a dozen that did not damn the President. You may put all the pure Unionism in Kentucky into one scale and a ten pound nigger baby in the other and the Unionism will kick the beam."

"Are you willing that I should go and get my boy?" persisted Robertson.

"Yes, sir," was the reply, "you may go and I will remain here."

"Do you think I shall be permitted to take him?"

"I think not, but I can not tell."

The Judge stamped out of the tent, followed by the officer, and got in his carriage.

"Will you send him into some other regiment?" inquired the old gentleman, poking his head out of the vehicle.

"No, sir," shouted Utley, "I would see you in hell first."²

Rushing back to town, Judge Robertson sent the President an urgent, indignant message, to which on the impulse of the moment Lincoln replied:

Private

Executive Mansion,
Washington, Nov. 20. 1862.

Hon. Geo. Robertson

My dear Sir.

Your despatch of yesterday is just received. I believe you are

acquainted with the American Classics (if there be such) and probably remember a speech of Patrick Henry, in which he represents a certain character in the, revolutionary times, as totally disregarding all questions of country, and "hoarsely bawling, beef! beef!! beef!!!"

Do you not know that I may as well surrender this contest, directly, as to make any order, the obvious purpose of which would be to return fugitive slaves?

Yours very truly

A. Lincoln³

But the President on further consideration was evidently afraid that this letter might offend the Judge, and so he put it away in the executive files and sent another instead:

Private

Executive Mansion,
Washington, Nov. 26, 1862.

Hon. Geo. Robertson,

My dear Sir:

A few days since I had a despatch from you which I did not answer. If I were to be wounded personally, I think I would not shun it. But it is the life of the nation. I now understand the trouble is with Col. Utley; that he has five slaves in his camp, four of whom belong to rebels, and one belonging to you. If this be true, convey yours to Col. Utley, so that he can make him free, and I will pay you any sum not exceeding five hundred dollars.

Yours, &c.

A. Lincoln⁴

The President's generous offer was promptly refused by Judge Robertson. Colonel Utley must deliver his slave or compensate him to the full extent of his value. Knowing that the colonel would do neither, the irate Judge sued him in the United States District Court and recovered a judgment for \$908.06 plus costs of \$26.40, which Congress paid by a special appropriation after the war.⁵

Meanwhile, Judge Robertson had also appeared before the grand jury and told his story, and that body had promptly returned an indictment against Utley for harboring a slave and aiding in his escape, all of which was a felony in Kentucky.

When the warrant was delivered to the sheriff to be served on the colonel, Utley wrote a hurried letter to the President, explaining the situation and inquiring whether "soldiers from free states in the service of the General Government are to be subject to the civil authorities and the slave code of slave holding states. To you," said Utley, "I now appeal for that protection which can come from no other human hands for simply standing by the Constitution, obeying the laws of Congress and honoring the Proclamation of the President of the United States issued on the 23d day of September last."⁶

At the same time the colonel also sent a lengthy communication to his friend, Alexander W. Randall, Lincoln's recently returned minister to Rome, part of which read as follows:

I am in a devil of a scrape, and appeal to you for assistance . . . they have got me indicted at Lexington under the Laws of Kentucky. The Warrent is in the hands of the Sherriff of this County . . . he finds the same dificulty that the rats did in getting the bell on the cat, it would be a good thing to have done, but a bad thing to do. They find it so in arresting me, they can never do it while there is a man left in the 22d Regiment. The Brig. Genl. in whose Brigade we now are, Refuses to assist in arresting me. Now what I want, is to have you use your influence with the President to have him retained in command of this Brigade, for he certainly will be removed, from this command unless measures are taken to prevent, or we shall again be placed under some pro Slavery red tape *Jcass* as we have been ever since we came in to the state until we were placed under him. You know how we was hurried off without Blankets, tents or anything to make us comfortable. Kentucky was howling like a set of d—d Hyenas (as they are) for help. The men left their grain standing in the feild, we all throwed down our impliments and started. . . . We have had to submit to most degrading Orders. . . . We have laid in the dirt five nights on an old Rebel ex Congressmans farm (with a large straw stack roting down within 40 Rods of us) under order from Genl. Gilmore threatning me with severe punishment if I allowed the men to touch it. . . . There is no such thing as Loyalty or unionism in Kentuckey, it is all a humbug. I wish Abraham Lincoln could hear what the professed union men call him. I told the Governor

(Robinson) that all Kentuckeyans were either d---d Trators or cowards, that thare was no Loyalty in the state. . . . I have given them hell, and now they intend to give me h---l.⁷

Robertson's complaint to Lincoln was the first inkling of a situation in Kentucky that gave him many anxious hours in the months to come. The proposed Emancipation Proclamation touched the Unionist of the Bluegrass in his most tender spot. Forced to a choice between loyalty to Lincoln and their innate love for slave property, hundreds of Unionists deluged the White House with vigorous protest against either governmental or military interference with the "institution" in Kentucky.

"I consider secession an enormous and inexcusable heresy," wrote a venerable Lexington clergyman, veteran of the Battle of New Orleans, to Lincoln. "But," said he, "a state of things exists in our midst which is alarming to those who love its Constitution and laws. I allude to the improper interference of some of the officers and soldiers of the United States army with our slave-property. . . . Our people—loyal to the Constitution and the Union—have borne this outrage until forbearance in their apprehension has ceased to be a virtue, and I very much fear that, unless speedily arrested, a bloody collision between citizens and the soldiers will be the result."⁸

Things had just about reached the breaking point when a streak of rare good fortune struck the Bluegrass. The Forty-Eighth Pennsylvania Regiment of Infantry was detached from the Army of the Potomac for provost guard duty in central Kentucky. Late in the afternoon of the last day of March, 1863, these troops arrived in Lexington by train from Covington and pitched temporary camp at the fair grounds.

The Forty-Eighth was composed of Pennsylvania boys recruited from Schuylkill County's mining region, and though young in years, they were veterans of some of the bloodiest engagements of the war—second Bull Run, South Mountain, Antietam, and Fredericksburg.⁹ Lieutenant Colonel Henry Pleasants, descendant of a fine old Virginia Quaker family,

acted as provost marshal during most of the regiment's long stay in Lexington, and it was not long before he and his men had won not only the affection of the Unionists, but also the respect of most of the "Secesh" element. All agreed that these quiet, friendly, well-disciplined, battle-seasoned young Pennsylvanians were vastly superior to the raw, rambunctious recruits from Wisconsin and Indiana who had so greatly annoyed and occasionally terrorized the populace while quartered here.

The remarkable harmony and accord existing between these soldiers and the people of the Bluegrass during the five months of their service is reflected in letters which Private Henry Clay Heisler wrote to his sister.

The regiment had comfortable barracks in an old hemp factory out North Limestone Street. Lexington in three weeks time, he wrote, had become

the same to me as home. On Sundays we go to church and sunday school and go in the bible class with girls and enjoy ourselves, the same as if we were at home. . . . I have made myself acquainted with a couple of girls and go to see them very often and hear them play the piano and sing. At the same time I interest the old folks with some of our war stories that we have seen and gone through. They say we are the best behaved soldiers they ever saw. Nearly every evening there are a lot of ladies up to see us on Dress Parade. The boys all look very well. They have short, dark blue jackets, light blue pants and white gloves on and their shoes well polished and everything fixed that becomes a soldier. You don't see any of our boys in town with red shoes on or the hair down in their eyes like some of the other soldiers, but have their hair trimmed, shoes blacked and gloves washed before they go down in the city. The city is a very fine place. It is about as large as Reading and splendid houses. . . . We are treated better than we could expect among strangers, even better than we would in our own state.¹⁰

On July 9 young Heisler wrote home:

I received your letter on the 6 inst., but I had no chance of answering before. On the night of the fifth about 10 o'clock we were aroused out of our beds to prepare for an attack. Our scouts brought news that Gen. Morgan and his Guerillas was marching

on Lexington so we had to get sixty rounds of cartridges and be ready to receive him. . . . He happened to meet some of our cavalry not far from here and got licked and was forced to retreat. . . . Gen. Morgan's adjutant gen. was captured by our cavalry along with three privates. His adjutant is a brother-in-law to him. He is now in prison in this place. Mrs. Morgan visited him yesterday in his cell. She had expected to see him marching at the head of the Rebel column through town but he didn't happen to be so lucky. Mrs. Morgan had been saying some time ago that the Gen. would be here and have possession of the city on the fourth of July, but it does not seem as if he did. We have but a handful of men in our regiment, but we have enough for him any time he undertakes to try us.

On August 29 Heisler and his small detail were guarding Stoner's bridge in Bourbon County, finding it an easy assignment.

We go on guard every three nights and only stand three hours each, so the duty is not hard. . . . The farmers are very kind to us. They keep us in milk and butter without charge and they told us any time we want a sheep or hog or turkey we should come and ask for it and he would give it to us. Apples, peaches, pears and watermelons are plenty. We can get them any time we ask for them without pay and if any of our boys are at their house near meal times they can't go away without first eating dinner with them. . . . They are nearly all Sesesch about here but they treat us first rate better than we would ever get from a Pennsylvanian.

When General Orlando Wilcox was placed in command of the Central Military District of Kentucky and moved his headquarters to Lexington, he was so grateful for the good feeling existing between citizens and soldiers that he gave a "grand hop" to the "ladies and gentlemen of Lexington" who had shown such "heartly good will" to the Union troops. The fine old mansion still standing at the northeast corner of Second and Market and its spacious grounds were handsomely decorated with flags, swords, guns, drums, and other military accouterment. A famous orchestra was brought down from

Cincinnati, and an excellent caterer from that city served the delicious banquet.

It was about this time, however, that the military authorities of central Kentucky found it necessary to invoke Burnside's "General Order No. 38," which had received considerable notice through the banishment south of the prominent Ohio politician, Clement C. Vallandigham. Much valuable information was sifting through the Bluegrass from north to south. Indeed, Lexington had been recently discovered to be an important station of the Confederate secret mail service, and local authorities were instructed to serve notice on all "suspects" to "move into the rebel lines."

One afternoon Captain Oliver C. Bosbyshell received a peremptory order to serve one of these notices, which amazed and greatly shocked him. He was directed to proceed to the home of Dr. Robert J. Breckinridge and demand the removal of his daughter, wife of the Confederate major, Theodore Steele. Captain Bosbyshell had heard many of the old Doctor's eloquent speeches in support of the Union government and had intimate knowledge of what a tower of strength he was to the Union cause. Yet orders were orders, no matter how difficult to understand or perform. So, with a heavy heart he mounted his horse and rode out North Limestone in the bright sunshine of a midsummer day.

Riding three or four miles into the country, the captain came to "a neat porter's lodge" marking the entrance into "Braedalbane," which looked to him like one of the "country seats of English Lords." A roadway wound through a beautiful woodland perhaps half a mile to the "great mansion." Here Bosbyshell found Dr. Breckinridge "bareheaded," with his heavy shock of white hair "pushed about as though plowed through by his fingers," pacing thoughtfully up and down the broad piazza in front of the house.

In as few words as possible the young officer regretfully presented the written order, which the stanch old patriot read slowly. Then, as he realized its full import, the lines about

his mouth hardened and his countenance grew grave and stern. Raising his stooped shoulders, he brought his tall figure to military erectness. "Captain, this order shall be observed," he said grimly. And, as Bosbyshell later wrote, "It was."¹¹

Actually, the spy situation had grown so acute in central Kentucky that all citizens of Union sympathies found it necessary to regard every stranger as a "rebel" until his identity and loyalty were definitely established.

One day in August, Lieutenant Colonel Pleasants, post commander, Captain D. D. McGinnis, post adjutant, and Captain Bosbyshell started out the Bates Creek Pike for a short ride into the country. It was a lovely afternoon, and the three Pennsylvanians jogged along enjoying the Bluegrass scenery. Presently they met an old man galloping furiously toward Lexington. Seeing the men in uniform, he reined his sweaty nag and inquired if they could direct him to "the military authorities at Lexington." When informed that he was then in the presence of these officials, he seemed somewhat incredulous but finally concluded to state his case. After telling them his name was Featherstone and that he lived near the pike a few miles back, he said, "Well, gentlemen, you tell me you are the military authorities of Lexington. Whether you are or not, I want you to arrest a couple of men who've been down to my house for dinner; they're a ugly looking set of fellows and they talk bad. I think they're rebels in disguise, here for no good. They were asking me all about the people around here, and they seem to know a mighty heap about the rebels living about—more'n a Union man ought to. Well, they want to get to Mt. Sterling and asked me the nearest and best road. I told them to go through Lexington, although the best road takes off this side. When they left, I hurried to the stable, jumped on my old horse and cut across the field to head 'em off. They're not far back on the road—you'll meet 'em pretty soon. I'll get in the field as it will never do for them to see me with you."

Instructing Featherstone to hide in a clump of bushes near the turnpike, Pleasants and his companions spurred their horses, and shortly at a bend in the road they saw two tough-

looking characters—a long lank fellow in gray and a stout man wearing a black suit and a battered stovepipe hat—riding slowly toward them. Then as they came closer, the provost marshal to his great astonishment recognized one of them as Captain Edwards, chief of the Ohio Department of the Federal Secret Service, and his assistant, Lieutenant Stone.

After a hurried consultation it was agreed that for the benefit of their informant and in order to preserve the secrecy of the true identity of these agents, the two men should be marched into Lexington as though under arrest. So up the pike they rode—Edwards placed securely between Lieutenant Colonel Pleasants and Captain M’Ginnis, with Stone in the rear guarded by Captain Bosbyshell—past the thicket that concealed the gleefully satisfied Featherstone, through the tollgate near the city limits, and down the streets of the town, under the gaze of curious bystanders, to the sanctuary of the provost marshal’s office.¹²

Early autumn brought the Forty-Eighth’s long holiday to an end. On a September morning the regiment marched down Limestone Street to Main, thence to the Kentucky Central Railroad station, where a troop train waited on the siding. The frightful carnage of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, and Cold Harbor lay ahead of them. Colonel Pleasants would devise and prepare the great mine that exploded a year later under the Confederate works at Petersburg.

After being there so long it was very hard for us to leave Lexington [Private Heisler wrote his sister], and it was no harder for us than it was for the citizens. They were to us as brothers and were very sorry to see us leave. The whole town was out on the streets to see us leave and give us goodby. A great many of the ladies parted with us with tears in their eyes. When we were getting ready to go on the cars, the band played *Old Lang Syne* and brought tears from nearly every eye that was present. All of our boys said it never went so hard with them when they left home as it did when they left Lexington.¹³

The withdrawal of Union troops from central Kentucky greatly increased the problems of the President in his native

state. Guerrilla bands sprang up again. Confederate raids increased. Colonel Clarence Prentice at the head of a gang of irregulars who called themselves Confederates galloped into eastern Kentucky.

Colonel Prentice was the erratic, impulsive, unreliable son of George D. Prentice, founder and famed editor of the Louisville *Journal*, the first newspaper for which Lincoln had ever subscribed. Though the *Journal* strongly opposed "secession," its editor had been consistently critical of Lincoln and his policies since the day he had denounced the President's first call for troops as "unworthy not merely of a statesman but of a man."

During the first two years of the war Editor Prentice had written many carping letters to Lincoln, but now he hurriedly penned another entirely different in tone and contents. It read in part: "Mr. Lincoln, I have a great favor to ask of you. Hear me! My only child, Clarence J. Prentice, God help him, is a Major in the Confederate Service. A few weeks ago, he came into Kentucky and being cut off from his command, he came by night to his home to see me and his mother and his baby. He was seen coming and in a few hours arrested. He is now at Camp Chase and his mother in Columbus. He desires I know to serve no longer in the war." Prentice then assured the President that his son would be willing to sign an oath to remain outside both the United States and the Confederate States for the remainder of the war, and he fervently urged that the prisoner be paroled upon these terms. "His mother will go with him and he will never bear arms against us again," wrote Prentice. "I will be surety for this with fortune and life. I have written to Gen. Burnside to let my son remain at Camp Chase until I hear from you. Please let it be soon for I am most unhappy."¹⁴

Lincoln had promptly submitted Prentice's letter to his judge advocate, blunt old Kentuckian Joseph Holt, who emphatically protested young Prentice's release upon the conditions proposed by his father. "Clarence J. Prentice himself,"

said Holt, "has made no communication to the government expressive of his feelings in regard to the war or of his future plans and purposes. . . . He left his home in a state then still loyal and voluntarily and wantonly banded with traitors." Holt reminded the President that he had no guarantee whatever "that the prisoner thus tenderly dealt with would not at the first opportunity re-enter the rebel military service."¹⁵

Not having heard from Lincoln, Editor Prentice wrote him again:

Journal Office
Louisville, Ky.
May 6, 1863

To The President Of The United States

Dear Sir,

I wrote to you last week in regard to my son, Major Clarence Prentice, now a rebel prisoner at Camp Chase. He would ere this have been forwarded for exchange but Gen. Burnside, at my solicitation, consented to have him detained until I could have time to hear from you. I think there has been time, but I have received nothing from you either by mail or telegraph. I know that the pressure of the affairs of state upon you is very great. Perhaps you did not read my letter at all.

Major Prentice is the only child left to me. My household is very desolate. My son is tired of the war, but unfortunately he thinks the south right. I ask you to direct his release upon his taking the non combatants oath and giving bond and security for its scrupulous observance. If you cannot do this, as I painfully fear you cannot, I earnestly appeal to you to parole him to stay outside of both the United States and the Southern Confederacy until after the rebellion.

I should scarcely venture, Mr. President, to make this appeal to you but that I think I have served the union cause faithfully, devotedly and successfully. I have suffered very much and sacrificed very much in its behalf—more, I am sure, than any other man in Kentucky; and I am likely, even at the best, to suffer and sacrifice much hereafter. I think there is not a candid and intelligent union man in this state who would hesitate to say to you that I have saved it to the union politically.

And now, dear sir, pray grant me what I ask in behalf of my only son. His mother is half delirious, and so am I. I am scarcely capable of performing my daily duties to the country, but, if my request were granted, I feel I should be buoyant with new life.

Please let me know your decision soon, for, if my son cannot be paroled upon either of the conditions I have mentioned, I want him sent forward as soon as possible to City Point, as he is extremely uncomfortable in his present situation.

Is it too much to ask that you will telegraph me upon the receipt of this?

Geo. D. Prentice¹⁶

Ten days later the President issued an order, written on the back of Prentice's letter, instructing General Burnside to parole young Prentice "to remain outside the limits of both the loyal and disloyal States, or so-called 'Confederate States,' of the United States of America, during the present rebellion, and to abstain from in any wise aiding or abetting said rebellion." However, just as Judge Holt had predicted, Clarence Prentice had immediately upon his release from Camp Chase violated his oath and re-entered the Confederate lines. Only a few months after his parole, he was robbing banks, burning courthouses, and spreading terror and destruction generally along the Kentucky-Virginia border, while his father, forgetful of the President's response to his tearful appeals, sharpened his pencil for bitter opposition to Lincoln's re-election the following year.

However, the President had little time to reflect upon the duplicity which had been practiced upon him in the Prentice matter because of a deep personal tragedy which again fell upon the White House. On the morning of September 20 Ben Hardin Helm, the husband of Emilie, was killed while leading his brigade in a furious assault against Rosecrans at Chickamauga. Judge David Davis said that he called upon Lincoln about four o'clock on September 22 and found him grieving deeply over the death of the young Confederate general.

"Davis," said he, "I feel as David of old did when he was told of the death of Absalom."¹⁷

Emilie and her three small children were at Selma, Alabama, when her husband died, and she was able to reach Atlanta in time for the funeral. Nothing now was left to keep her in the South, and her friends set about finding a way for an early return to her mother's home at Lexington. Application for a pass was made to the military authorities, but after weeks of delay it was refused. Then, not knowing that Lincoln had forwarded one to Lexington which permitted her mother to "go south and bring her daughter, Mrs. Genl. B. Hardin Helm with her children, North to Kentucky," Mrs. Helm started home without credentials but was promptly detained at Fortress Monroe by officials who refused to permit her to continue her journey unless she took the oath of allegiance to the United States. This the little widow firmly declined to do, and finally it occurred to someone to telegraph the President, who immediately wired, "Send her to me."¹⁸

Emilie, a pathetic figure in her widow's weeds, found upon reaching the White House that war had taken its toll of Mary and "brother" Lincoln too. He was thin and careworn—actually looked ill. Mary was pale and tense with a constant look of distress in her deep blue eyes. Both of them received Emilie with warm affection and did everything to make her brief visit as pleasant as possible. All mention of the war was strictly avoided. Indeed Emilie remembered gratefully a particular incident which showed the President's fine tact and ability to direct unpleasant situations into harmless channels.

The yellow pine and scaly-bark hickory logs burned brightly on the wide hearth of the White House sitting room. Lincoln, resting briefly from the burdens of state, relaxed in his big armchair, casually scanning an afternoon newspaper. On the high-backed settee in a corner near the mantelpiece Mary talked in sober undertones with Emilie.

Merry, tousle-headed, mischievous Tad Lincoln, ten years old, sat upon the thick rug in front of the fire, entertaining

his small cousin, Katherine Helm, aged six, with a batch of photographs. He showed her pictures of himself, the Lincoln residence at Springfield, and several views of the Capitol. Then he picked up a likeness of his father. "This is the President," he announced proudly. But his little cousin shook her long, auburn curls with emphasis. "No," she said firmly, "that's not the President. Mr. Davis is President."

Momentarily taken back by this unexpected assertion, Tad recovered quickly, repeated his statement, and, to put the matter beyond further contradiction, shouted shrilly, "Hurrah for Abe Lincoln!" And tiny Katherine replied defiantly, "Hurrah for Jeff Davis!"

At that point Lincoln, who had watched the gathering storm with quiet chuckles, reached down and scooped the flushed and glaring belligerents into his long, sinewy arms. For a moment he held them to him in close embrace before placing one on each knee. "Well, Tad, you know who is your President, and anyway, I am your little cousin's Uncle Lincoln," he said with a smile and a twinkle in his deep-set eyes that restored complete harmony.¹⁹

Emilie spent almost a week at the White House, and then Lincoln sent her back to Lexington to her mother with a pass which read: "Executive Mansion, Washington, December 14, 1863. Whom it may concern It is my wish that Mrs. Emily T. Helm (widow of the late Gen. B. H. Helm, who fell in the Confederate service) now returning to Kentucky, may have protection of person and property, except as to slaves, of which I say nothing. A. Lincoln."²⁰

A few days after Emilie left the White House the President had more "in-law" trouble. Her sister, Martha Todd White, wife of Major Clement C. White of Selma, Alabama, arrived in Washington. Martha was an attractive, vivacious, intelligent young woman, more like Mary Lincoln in appearance and personality than any of her sisters or half sisters. In the early years of the war she had been a welcome guest at the Executive



MARTHA TODD WHITE, MRS. LINCOLN'S HALF SISTER
Original photograph owned by the author



MARY TODD LINCOLN, IN THE AUTUMN OF 1863
Meserve Collection



EMILIE TODD HELM, AS SHE LOOKED AT THE WHITE HOUSE
Original photograph owned by the author



CAPTAIN DAVID TODD, MRS. LINCOLN'S HALF BROTHER
Original photograph owned by the author

Mansion, until she filled secret pockets in her voluminous petticoats with quinine, carried the contraband south, and boasted of how she had hoodwinked her unsuspecting brother-in-law.

Now she again went boldly to the White House and sent in her card to Mrs. Lincoln. This time Mary declined to receive her. Next day she attempted to see the President, with the same result. Then from her hotel she wrote Lincoln arrogantly demanding a pass that would permit her to "replenish" her "wardrobe" and take south "trunks without being examined" which would, so she said, contain merely for her "own use articles not now to be obtained in the south." When Lincoln refused this request, Martha had talked "secesh" at the National Hotel and with only an ordinary pass had left for the South in high dudgeon with considerable baggage, which received sharp comment in the public press.

According to the story which appeared in the newspapers, "Mrs. M. Todd White, a sister of Mrs. President Lincoln, a rebel spy and sympathizer," went down on the flag of truce steamer *New York* from Fortress Monroe to City Point. When she was "passed into the Confederacy, she carried in her trunks all kinds of contraband goods . . . which will be doubtless of the greatest assistance to those with whom she consorts." When General Butler wished to open her trunks, "this woman showed him an autographed pass or order from President Lincoln enjoining upon the Federal officers not to open any of her trunks, and not subject the bearer of the pass, her packages, parcels, or trunks to any inspection or annoyance."

The story further said that Mrs. White had announced to General Butler and his provost marshal, "My trunks are filled with contraband, but I defy you to touch them. Here (pushing it under their noses), here is the positive order of your master!" Mrs. White was thus allowed to continue her journey without the inspection and annoyance "so peremptorily forbidden by President Lincoln, in an order written and signed by his own hand, and today the contents of his wife's sister's trunks are giving aid and comfort to the enemy—not least is

the shock which these facts will give to the loyal hearts whose hopes and prayers and labors sustain the cause which is thus betrayed in the very White House!"²¹

Of course this widely circulated tale disturbed Lincoln greatly—so much so that he considered it necessary to explain the whole matter to his cabinet and request of General Butler a full statement of the circumstances under which Mrs. White had been passed through the Union lines.

Butler's reply, the substance of which was printed in the New York *Tribune*, stated that "Mrs. White went south with only the ordinary pass which the President gives to those persons whom he permits to go"; that the pass did not except her baggage from the usual inspection; that said baggage did undergo inspection without any contraband goods being found; and that Mrs. White "did not insult or defy him."²²

Butler's emphatic disavowal seems to have closed this vexatious matter on a note satisfactory to the public; but recently discovered, hitherto unpublished letters written to Emilie Todd Helm from a highly reputable source seem to discredit much of Butler's avowal as to the inspection of her baggage.

On September 26, 1898, Henry Kyd Douglas, a prominent lawyer of Hagerstown, Maryland, wrote Emilie Helm. He said that he had just read her article in *McClure's Magazine* on Mrs. Lincoln. He inquired whether or not Mrs. Lincoln had a sister or half sister by the name of White who lived at Selma, Alabama.

I was a Confederate officer on the staff of Genl. Jackson (Stonewall) & subsequent to his death was severely wounded at Gettysburg & captured [continued Colonel Douglas]. Nine months later when I was exchanged, Mrs. "Todd White," as I used to call her, was placed under my escort at Fortress Monroe to take through to Richmond. I was very young & had been in prison for a long time & she was so nice to me, and I well remember how much I admired her. I left her in Richmond to join the army which was about to move to open the campaign of 1864 and I think her husband joined her there. I never heard of her again, but kept for years a silk

handkerchief she gave me. I see you do not mention her among Mrs. Lincoln's sisters living and I fear she is dead.²³

When Mrs. Helm wrote Douglas that Mrs. White had died July 9, 1868, only a month past her thirty-fifth birthday, he expressed deep regret and then referred to the "contraband" incident. He said that some years previously, when General Butler was governor of Massachusetts, he had met him on a fishing expedition and that Butler had recalled the controversial occasion when Mrs. White passed through Richmond and the provost marshal had insisted that he seize her baggage.

"The General smilingly asked me," wrote Douglas, "if it could be true that the President's wife's sister could have been carrying contraband goods to the rebels!"

Then Douglas went on to say that one of her twelve trunks had contained the trousseau of Hetty Carey, who became the bride of General John Pegram, and he continued:

By the way, I remember another trunk contained two five gallon cans, one of old brandy & one of fine whiskey. They were intended for the hospital. However, just after we reached Richmond Genl. John Morgan who had escaped from prison & some officers arrived. They called on Mrs. White & she handed me the key to that trunk. I could even at this date make an affidavit that none of that spirits reached the hospital, but I do know that the splendid scarlet robe she once threw over her to show Mrs. Stanard & myself did make facings for several hundred artillery uniforms—perhaps that was contraband!²⁴

Unfortunately, the conclusion of the White episode did not fully solve Lincoln's family problems. Bitter complaint was being made of brutal treatment of Union prisoners by Mrs. Lincoln's brother, George Todd, and her half brother, David Todd.

David, the half brother, had run away from his home in Lexington when he was only fourteen years of age, had enlisted in a company of Mexican War volunteers, and had participated gallantly in a number of the fiercest engagements

south of the Rio Grande. Restless and adventurous, at the end of the war he had joined the gold rush to California, had fought as a soldier of fortune in a Chilean revolution, and before settling down in New Orleans, had spent several years on the high seas as a sailor. He had the colorful Chilean flag tattooed on his left arm. There was also in India ink an anchor on his right arm, crossed guns and a shot and game pouch on his right breast, and a heart pierced with an arrow on his left breast.²⁵

Now, David with the rank of captain was one of the wardens of Libby Prison at Richmond. Among other charges of cruelty toward Union soldiers, a Sergeant Whitcomb of Colonel Wilson's Michigan Regiment claimed that one day he was leaning against a post reading when Captain Todd, who was then in command of the guard, came up without saying a word and slashed him "severely across the leg with his saber."²⁶

Furthermore, it was reported that David was fond of relating an incident, highly improbable on its face, which he claimed to have occurred in the early days of the war when he had gone north to obtain information for the South on the manufacture of certain war materials. Without disclosing either his mission or his sympathy for the Confederate cause, he had visited his sister and her husband in the White House. However, according to David, he was being watched by government detectives, and finally by order of the President he was arrested. It was then, as he laughingly pointed out, that he had promptly and completely befuddled and outwitted his stupid captors. Begging the privilege of attending a wedding party over in Georgetown, he "availed himself of a favorable opportunity, slipped out, jumped into a hack and, compelling the hackman to drive him to the Potomac River, succeeded in crossing it and escaped to Richmond, where he joined the Confederate Army!"²⁷

George Todd, youngest of Robert S. Todd's first children, was stockily built, intelligent, high-tempered, egotistical, and eccentric, unable since childhood to get along with friends or

family. Before the war his first wife had divorced him on the ground of cruelty. He was a doctor, and when the war began, he joined the Confederacy and became surgeon in charge of the Rickersville Hospital four miles out of Charleston. Many sick and wounded soldiers, including Captain H. A. Coats of Company G, Eighty-Fifth New York Volunteers, and Captain C. W. Brant of the First New York Cavalry, told the most revolting stories of Dr. Todd's mistreatment of enemy patients at Rickersville. Some of them went so far as to say that Todd was "the most degraded of all the rebels" that they came in contact with during the war. A favorite diversion was proclaiming his kinship with the "Yankee President" and then denouncing him in the most lurid and unprintable language.²⁸

Captain Brant said that he had never heard a man who was the doctor's equal in the use of "volleys of profane and obscene language." In his "fits of madness" he would pound and kick the inmates, and order them "bucked and gagged" for small infraction of rules. He seemed to have a special antipathy for "Yankee" patients from his own state, and it was a young lieutenant from a Kentucky regiment upon whom he delighted to "vent his spite." One day the sick youth gave him an answer which did not suit him, and Todd "pulled him off the bunk to the floor and kicked him in the most brutal manner." Then he had him bucked and gagged for more than an hour. Next day the soldier died. "I am god damned glad of it," said Todd, "I meant to kill the son of a bitch before he left here." Said Captain Brant, "Dr. George Todd was the most vicious wretch I ever knew."²⁹

With Malice toward None

EARLY in January, 1864, the Union candidate for mayor of Lexington was defeated by Joseph Wingate. Z. Gibbons, candidate for city attorney, whose platform was "unflinching devotion to the Union cause," was overwhelmingly beaten by Richard H. Prewitt.¹

On the same day the storm broke on the floor of the Senate, when Garret Davis of Kentucky, protesting absolute loyalty to the Union, introduced a vicious resolution against "Abraham Lincoln, his office holders, contractors and other followers," and appealed to "all men who are for ejecting Lincoln and his party from office and power."²

The yoke of martial law was now galling the anti-Lincoln element of the Bluegrass almost beyond endurance. General Burbridge was a stern, harsh commanding officer. Criticism of the government was "treason" to him, and he dealt with it accordingly. "For every depredation committed upon Union men, I will retaliate threefold upon the Copperheads and Rebel sympathizers in the vicinity," he wrote Colonel Maxwell.³ "Have the men been shot that I ordered?" he wired General

Ewing. "If not, have them shot at once, except Goulder. Send him to Lexington."⁴

But the President repeatedly thwarted General Burbridge in the infliction of the death penalty. With infinite patience and tireless vigilance he seized every pretext to soften the rigor of military rule. "Suspend execution and send me the record," was the order that came over the wires so frequently from the White House that the general wrung his hands in despair.⁵

Lincoln knew perfectly well that the Emancipation Proclamation had made him many enemies, not only in the Border States, but all over the North. He realized that freeing the slaves probably meant his defeat for re-election.

But he had given the subject earnest, prayerful thought before striking the shackles loose. He had promised God to do it, and he had kept his word.⁶ "I am a slow walker," he said when asked if the proclamation was a finality, "but I never walk back."⁷

And now as the torrent of vilification and abuse rolled upon him from all sides, as friends deserted him by the score, the lonely man in the White House never lost his faith that "right makes might." Calmly he went about the performance of his daily tasks, while those about him marveled at his droll simplicity and gentle, unruffled good humor.

A little after midnight [wrote young John Hay in his Diary], the President came into the office laughing, with a volume of Hood's Works in his hand, to show Nicolay and me the little caricature, "An Unfortunate Bee-ing," seemingly utterly unconscious that he, with his shirt hanging about his long legs, and setting out behind like the tail feathers of an enormous ostrich, was infinitely funnier than anything in the book he was laughing at. What a man it is! Occupied all day with matters of vast moment, deeply anxious about the fate of the greatest army of the world, with his own plans and future hanging on the events of the passing hour, he yet has such a wealth of simple *bonhomie* and good fellowship that he gets out of bed and perambulates the house in his shirt to find us, that we may share with him the fun of poor Hood's queer little conceits.⁸

Lincoln's irascible, humorless secretary of war, however, had no patience with such apparent frivolity. "God damn it to hell, was there ever such nonsense!" he muttered to Charles A. Dana as the President relieved tedious waiting for returns on the night of his second election by reading aloud from *Petroleum V. Nasby*. "Was there ever such inability to appreciate what is going on in an awful crisis? Here is the fate of this whole republic at stake, and here is the man around whom it all centers, on whom it all depends, turning aside from this momentous issue, to read the God damned trash of a silly mountebank!"⁹

During the weeks following the Emancipation Proclamation public resentment against the President waxed furious. On March 10 at an elaborate ceremony in Melodeon Hall the Union citizens of Lexington presented Colonel Frank Wolford of the First Kentucky Cavalry with a costly sword, sash, pistols, and spurs in appreciation of his valiant service against the rebels. After an intensely loyal presentation address by the Reverend Mr. Dandy, Colonel Wolford arose to accept the handsome gifts and, to the amazement of the audience, launched into the most violent abuse of the "Lincoln government." In heated language he charged the President with wantonly trampling upon the Constitution and crushing under the iron heel of military power the rights of the people. He declared that Lincoln had violated his solemn pledge, repeatedly enunciated at the commencement of his administration, as to the purposes of the war. He denounced his violation of the rules of civilized warfare in the "indiscriminate, widespread ruin which he is sowing broadcast throughout the South."

The colonel closed his speech by stating that he was aware that there were always in every public assembly nowadays "pimps and informers" who made it their business to report to the "fountains of power and patronage" what was said in opposition to them. He called upon such "ilk" to report what

he said accurately, and among other things they might inform Lincoln, if he desired to know what those in the army whom he considered his minions thought of his official course, that "their opinion was that he was a tyrant and a usurper."¹⁰

The Wolford outburst was hailed with extravagant praise by the "Conservative Unionists" who were actively espousing the candidacy of George B. McClellan as Lincoln's successor.¹¹ On the other hand, the speech was severely condemned by the "Unconditional Unionists," and after consultation with Dr. Breckinridge and Judge Goodloe, General Burbridge arrested Wolford. But Lincoln intervened again, and in a short time the colonel was released from custody.

Encouraged by Wolford's example, other champions of McClellan now mounted the stump with venomous tirades against the Lincoln administration and his "idolators" in Kentucky. "Lieut.-Governor Jacobs made a speech," wrote Judge Goodloe to Dr. Breckinridge. "He spoke of you sneeringly as a political preacher. His speech was short & weak & he is very small potatoes. . . . He denounced me as having lied. My friends advise me not to notice it but I shall be content to prove *him* both a fool & a liar."¹²

A call now arose on all sides from the Unconditional Unionists of the Bluegrass for Dr. Breckinridge. Only his fame and eloquence could check the onrushing waves of anti-Lincoln sentiment that threatened to engulf that region. "We are looking forward with great anxiety to our county court day in April next," wrote Hiram Shaw to the Doctor, "that you may give us one of those old fashioned patriotic and law-abiding speeches that we so much need in these lawless & perilous times."¹³ And on April court day before an audience, presided over by Judge Goodloe, that packed Cheapside, Dr. Breckinridge poured a thundering broadside into the Copperheads and "McClellanites" that wreathed the Lincoln men with smiles.

Five weeks later the Doctor was chosen on the Kentucky delegation to the National Union convention. The news that

the rugged old patriot would be at Baltimore caused great joy among the supporters of the administration, and a friend informed him that Lincoln was "especially gratified." Urgent invitations were received to speak in Boston, New York, and Brooklyn, which the Doctor was compelled to decline.

Your letter [wrote another friend to Breckinridge] contained so much that was *definite* and apparently *conclusive* about Kentucky affairs, and especially stated the duty of the Gen'l Gov't to protect the loyal, and the purity of elections &c, if necessary, in that state that I thought, although you did not request it, it would be well to show it to the President. I went to the White House the next day, and sent in my card, and put on it "with a letter from Dr. Breckinridge on the political situation in Kentucky." I was soon invited in, in advance of several gentlemen who were there before me. This I attributed to the letter I had from you. The President was much gratified at the whole letter—said your view of the political situation there corresponded with what Col. Hodges had written him &c. When he came to that part where you spoke of the General government exercising its powers in the elections, if necessary, he paused and said, with a good deal of emphasis and stern expression of countenance, "whenever it is needed and we can understand it, the loyal people of Kentucky shall have all the aid and protection which the power of the government can give them."¹⁴

Lincoln had never yet ignored a plea, personal or political, trifling or important, from any of the "loyal people" of his state. Indeed the radical element in Congress charged that he lent a too sympathetic ear to the friends and relatives of those in arms against the Union. Appeals of all sorts, many of them from central Kentucky, came to the White House almost daily, and frequently efforts were made to enlist Mrs. Lincoln's influence with her husband.

On March 31, 1864, Mrs. Lincoln received a letter from Mrs. Sallie Ward Hunt, one of the noted belles of the Bluegrass, whose husband was with Morgan. She wrote to "beg" her "influence" in procuring the release of "some white satin chairs, piano," and other valuable personal effects which were being held by Union authorities in New Orleans. "The ar-

ticles mentioned are endeared to me by association," she explained. "As a musician my piano I love as a friend. . . . Relying upon your known kindness and nobleness of heart, I hope to hear from you and through your influence to obtain my wishes."¹⁵

Several weeks later one of the President's confidential advisers in Kentucky received the following communication:

Executive Mansion,
Washington, April 11. 1864.

Whom it may concern

I know nothing on the subject of the attached letter, except as therein stated. Neither do I personally know Mrs. Hunt. She has, however, from the beginning of the war, been constantly represented to me as an open, and somewhat influential friend of the Union. It has been said to me, (I know not whether truly) that her husband is in the rebel army, that she avows her purpose to not live with him again, and that she refused to see him when she had an opportunity during one of John Morgan's raids into Kentucky. I would not offer her, or any wife, a temptation to a permanent separation from her husband; but if she shall avow that her mind is already, independently and fully made up to such separation, I shall be glad for the property sought by her letters, to be delivered to her, upon her taking the oath of December 8, 1863.

A. Lincoln¹⁶

As the date for the convention approached, disastrous news from the battle front increased the apprehension of those most concerned in the renomination and re-election of Abraham Lincoln. Grant was on the road to Richmond, but he was paying Lee a terrible toll. Twelve thousand Union soldiers had fallen at Cold Harbor in half an hour. Transports blocked the Potomac with the dead and wounded. The stock market collapsed, and hoarse shouts went up from the Copperheads for the abdication of "Lincoln, the bloody Tyrant."

On June 7, 1864, Senator Morgan called the perspiring delegates of the National Union convention to order in the Front Street Theater at Baltimore. A military band from Fort McHenry "animated the crowded theatre with national airs,

and the assemblage was graced by the presence of many ladies, who were accommodated in one of the tiers of boxes." In a brief speech the senator from New York announced the choice of Dr. Robert J. Breckinridge for temporary chairman, and the roof rang with three cheers for the "Old War Horse of Kentucky."

As the senator closed his remarks, Dr. Breckinridge quietly emerged from one of the wings, walked down to the front of the stage, and stood calmly waiting for the thunderous applause to subside. With his "white grizzly hair parting almost from the brows, thin face and long pointed beard," the temporary chairman was the most striking figure in the crowded hall. Senators on the platform and in the audience caught the strong resemblance in physique, voice, and personality to their old colleague, John C. Breckinridge, now a major general in the Confederate army.¹⁷

Then, in low, melodious tones with "every word dropping from his lips like a coin of gold—clear-cut, bright and beautiful," he began the delivery of probably the most remarkable speech that ever fell upon the ears of a political gathering. At the very outset of his remarks Dr. Breckinridge assumed that the Union candidate for the Presidency was already nominated. "No man doubts," said he, "that Abraham Lincoln shall be the nominee." But besides the selection of a President and a Vice-President, there were "other most solemn duties to perform. You have to lay down with clearness and precision the precepts on which you intend to carry on this great political contest and prosecute the war which is underneath them."

The Doctor declared that he was absolutely detached from politics. He was ready to join with all persons, regardless of former party affiliations, who "do not intend to permit this nation to be destroyed. . . . As a Union party," said he, "I will follow you to the end of the earth, and to the gates of death. But as an Abolition party, as a Republican party, as a Whig party, as a Democratic party, as an American party I

will not follow you one foot." He dwelt at length upon Lincoln's objects and purposes in the great conflict, and his plans for reconstruction. And in his peroration the "tall, slender Southerner, with eyes peering from heavy, overhanging brows, fairly electrified the crowd of doubting, jealous delegates."¹⁸

"No government has ever been built upon imperishable foundations which were not laid in the blood of traitors. It is a fearful truth, but we had as well avow it at once. Every blow you strike, and every rebel you kill, every battle you win, dreadful as it is to do it, you are adding, it may be a year, it may be a century, or ten centuries to the life of the government and the freedom of your children."

As these words fell from the lips of the venerable preacher-orator, the delegates sat as if stunned by the very intensity of his utterance. Friends of many years who knew that the old patriot had a "rebel" nephew and two "rebel" sons whom he loved better than life found their eyes blurred with tears as he struggled to control his emotions and then continued:

"I know very well that the sentiments which I am uttering will cause a great odium in the state in which I was born, which I love, where the bones of two generations of my ancestors, and some of my children are, and where very soon I shall lay my own. I know very well that my colleagues will incur odium if they endorse what I say and they, too, know it. But," and he raised his long arms high above his head and spoke with a slow, firm, ringing emphasis that sent a thrill through the convention, "we have put our faces toward the way in which we intend to go, and we will go in it to the end."¹⁹

The masterly keynote address removed the last semblance of discord among the delegates. Their duty was plain. The war must be won. Old Abe must be kept on the job. And on the following day Abraham Lincoln was unanimously nominated as the Union candidate for President of the United States.

Twenty-four hours later Dr. Breckinridge arrived in Washington with the committee appointed to notify Lincoln of the convention's choice. On Sunday, June 12, Senator Browning

made a notation in his diary: "Attended church at Representatives' Hall—Rev Robt J Breckenridge preached a very superior sermon, but I think hundreds were disappointed at not hearing a stump speech. T'was a pure gospel sermon, and very able."²⁰

The Doctor, however, had little time to tarry in the Capital. Stormy events were occurring in Kentucky which urgently required him, as General Burbridge's chief adviser,²¹ at Lexington. Morgan's cavalry was again sweeping toward the Bluegrass, leaving terror and destruction in its wake.

A year before, General Morgan and most of his brigade had been captured on his ill-fated raid through Ohio. Four months later by daring strategy he had escaped from the Columbus penitentiary, but with the bulk of his command in northern prisons and the rest scattered through other divisions of the Confederate army, only a few boys from the Bluegrass now rode with him on his last excursion into Kentucky.²²

On June 8 Morgan's troopers routed Burbridge's infantry at Mount Sterling and robbed the Farmer's Bank of \$60,000. At three o'clock on the morning of the tenth the flying columns swooped down upon Lexington and by daybreak were in full possession of the city. "They immediately proceeded to help themselves to whatever they wanted, and did so unstintingly," reported the *Observer*. "They broke open nearly all the shoe stores and hat stores in the place together with Mr. Spencer's saddlery establishment, from which they took everything they desired. . . . The livery stable of Mr. Frank Hord was visited and the finest horses in it were taken. Mr. John M. Clay had taken from him about \$25,000.00 worth of horses, among them being the famous Skedaddle, for which he had been offered \$8,000.00."²³ The *Observer* also reported the burning of the extensive brewery of Messrs. Wolf and Walker, the stables of Jas. A. Grinstead at the Association Race Course, and the robbery of the Branch Bank of Kentucky of about \$10,000 in gold, silver, and greenbacks.²⁴

I was startled on learning from Judge Carr [wrote the Reverend Mr. Pratt] that Jno. Morgan was in the state & that he was expected in town next morning with his men supposed to be 3 or 4 thousand. We went down town & found it was fully expected. I hastened home & told my wife & we concluded to retire & take everything quietly. I was fearful the rascals would come & steal my horse so at 2:00 o'clock I got up and concealed my horse in my smoke house, my neighbor Beck concealing his at the same time. While doing so, we saw three large fires break out in quick succession. . . . It looked frightful as if the town was to be set on fire. I got the servants up. I had vessels filled with water to extinguish fire if our house was set on fire. We heard random shots. After a while we lay down in our clothes, and at 4:00 o'clock another heavy picket firing all about town, & we had the sad spectacle of over two thousand rebels entering the town. The Federal forces retired to the fort & shortly commenced throwing loud shells from the fort over the town to where they were. It was hypnotic to see these missiles of death flying, whizzing over our houses. The rebels commenced stealing immediately, bursting open stores, especially shoe, hat & clothing & saddle & gathering up all the horses about town. They cleaned out a number of establishments leaving scarcely anything. They also robbed almost every individual they met of money, watches & pistols. They required Mr. Hill, cashier of Branch Bank to open the vaults & took 10,000 dollars mostly special deposits, of which Bro. Plunkett lost near 3,000 dollars in gold. They tried the other banks but got thwarted in their plans.²⁵

With Burbridge and heavy reinforcements hotly on his heels, Morgan's stay in Lexington was only a matter of hours. By seven o'clock that morning he was out of town on his way through Georgetown, Cynthiana, Flemingsburg, West Liberty, and thence over the mountains back into Virginia.

However, the general and his hard-riding cavalymen did not escape unscathed. Grave disaster met them at Cynthiana. On June 13 General Burbridge wired General Halleck: "I attacked Morgan at Cynthiana at daylight yesterday morning, and after an hour's hard fighting completely routed him, killing 300, wounding as many, and capturing nearly 400."²⁶

The following day Lincoln personally thanked Burbridge,

saying, "Have just read your despatch of action at Cynthiana. Please accept my congratulation and thanks for yourself and command."²⁷

The "rebel" raid came at just the right moment to render great assistance to the Union cause at the approaching election. For months the *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, *Louisville Journal*, and other Copperhead newspapers had bitterly denounced the tyranny and oppression of the Union troops, but the recent invasion of the Confederates demonstrated the fact that soldiers were very much alike regardless of the uniform they wore.

With the harrowing experiences of the middle of June fresh in the public mind, the Unionists of Lexington labored with unceasing vigor for the re-election of Abraham Lincoln. Dr. Breckinridge made many speeches in various portions of Kentucky.

On September 12 Mrs. Lincoln's brother Levi wrote Lincoln that on that date—court day in Lexington—"at the Odd Fellows Hall . . . *our old Friend* Dr Robt. Breckinridge addressed and made an appeal in your behalf that was greeted with *thunderering* [*sic*] applause. . . . I hope to see you get the vote of Kentucky where *you Mary* and *myself* hailed from. I will do my best to affect it . . . in place of getting only *one vote* in the city and four in the County of Fayette at your last election you will receive at least One Thousand."

Levi closed his letter, as he had done on other occasions, with a request for money. "I wish you would do me a favor for say Decbr. 1st. and loan me from \$150 to \$200 at the end of which time I will return *without fail* and use it to your advantage and my own as I stand in great need of things—that are necessary for the winter."²⁸

However, Dr. Breckinridge was not as sanguine as Levi over Lincoln's chances in Kentucky, but he was not at all willing to concede defeat. From Cincinnati he wrote the President: "I spoke here last night, to four or five thousand people, in the opera house; and am here, because I believe the best



MAJOR GENERAL CASSIUS M. CLAY



ABRAHAM LINCOLN IN 1864, *Meserve Collection*



"LIEUTENANT" TAD LINCOLN. *Meserve Collection*

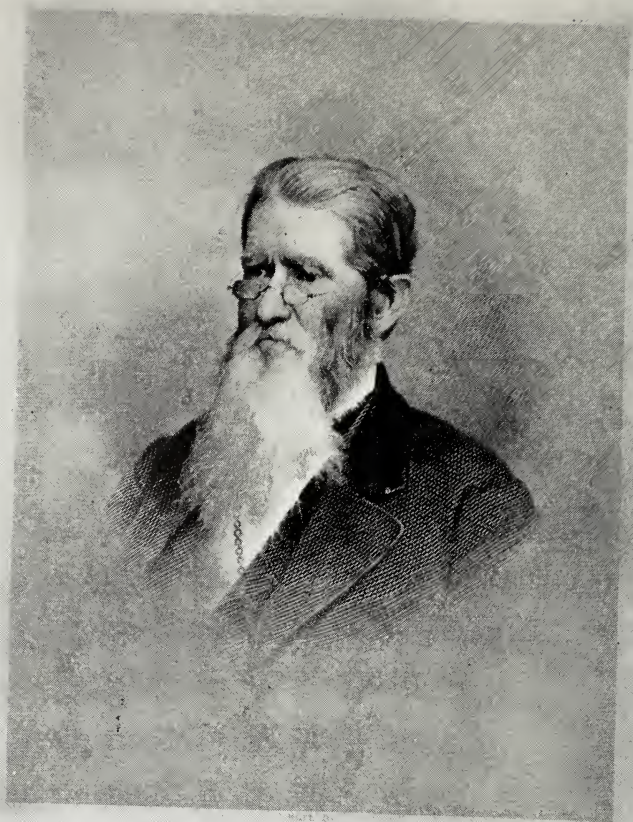


MARTHA M. JONES AND NELLIE. *From daguerreotype owned
by Nellie's granddaughter, Mrs. Lewis C. Williams*



LIEUTENANT WALLER R. BULLOCK

From original photograph owned by Dr. Josephine Hunt



May the grace of God add a sure
part in eternal life.

R. J. Breckinridge

THE REVEREND ROBERT J. BRECKINRIDGE
Autographed engraving owned by the Breckinridge family

thing that can be done for Kentucky just now, is to carry Ohio—and the other states which vote early in October—by great majorities. We can promise nothing for Ky., but will carry it for you, if we can—and are not without hope.”²⁹

The President could not know that at this very time when the Doctor was pleading night and day for the preservation of the Union, and preaching and predicting the early and utter destruction of the Confederacy, his stout old heart was filled with grief and anxiety over the plight of his young son Joseph, a Union lieutenant captured in one of the battles around Atlanta, who was then in prison at Charleston. In September he had just received a long-delayed letter from his rebel son, William C. P. Breckinridge, a colonel under Morgan, who had visited his brother.

I thank you for your letter, and for your kindness to Joseph [replied the Doctor]. I thank God for preserving your life amid so many dangers and for His care of Joseph; and if my poor prayers avail anything, you will both long survive these horrible times—and my own departure from them.

Your suggestion about the things needed by Joseph in his captivity has been immediately acted upon; the things will be sent by Truce Boat if possible; they will be duplicated for yourself if permission can be got—in the same way. I think it more important to keep him from suffering, than to get a special exchange. But that also is being attended to. . . .

And now my son if anything befalls you, wherein a loving father may be of use to you personally, in life or death—let me know. . . . I have written this almost without tears. What then is too hard for your loving father!³⁰

Late in September, Breckinridge crossed over into Illinois and delivered an address near Lincoln's old home on the Sangamon River in Menard County. On October 22 Salmon P. Chase, Lincoln's secretary of the treasury, made a strong speech at the Odd Fellows' Hall in Lexington, and when the polls closed November 8, 1864, the loyalty of Mary Lincoln's birth-place had been conclusively established.

“Lexington has done her whole duty,” said the Lexington

National Unionist in an editorial styled: "Lexington a True Union City." "Out of a vote of less than twelve hundred, she has given a loyal majority of 300, and that too against the influence of the former political leaders and the influence of the monied men of the city."³¹

However, any elation which the Lincolns felt over the result of the election was tempered sharply by harsh and angry accusations of one whose affection both of them had deeply cherished and warmly reciprocated. Emilie Helm had again visited the White House, but her short stay had been a most unpleasant ordeal for Mary and especially so for the President. She owned cotton in the south which she desperately needed to get out—not only to save it from probable destruction by Union troops but to dispose of it for the maintenance of herself and her three small, fatherless children. Emilie had strongly urged and finally demanded that her brother-in-law permit her to do this, but Lincoln with pain in his deep-set eyes sadly shook his head. Traffic in the cotton of that doomed region was rapidly becoming a public scandal. Already he was being severely criticized for issuing passes to persons of undoubted loyalty who had speculated outrageously in that commodity. Patiently and regretfully he had pointed out to Emilie that the fact of her being his wife's sister was sufficient in itself to cause adverse comment if her wishes were granted, to say nothing of the further fact that this property had belonged to a man in arms against his country, whose widow even now steadfastly refused to take the oath of allegiance to the United States. Emilie had been unable to see the logic of this position and had departed for home with deep resentment toward her relatives in Washington.

A few days later Lincoln had received a letter from Emilie which cut him to the quick and infuriated Mary. It began formally, "Mr. Lincoln," and went on: "Upon arriving at Lexington, after my long tedious unproductive and sorrowful visit to you, I found my Mother stretched upon a sick bed, made sick by the harrowing and shocking death of your Brother

in law, and my half Brother Levi Todd—He died from utter want and destitution as a letter sent to Sister Mary by Kitty gives particulars, another sad victim to the frowns of more favored relations.” She renewed her demand to be permitted to ship her cotton and be issued a pass to go south to attend to it. She urged it as a right “which humanity and justice always gives to widows and orphans. I also would remind you,” she continued, “that your *minnie bullets* have made us what we are & I feel I have that additional claim upon you.” Then, as if she had begun to realize what she was saying, she concluded, “If you think I give way to excess of feeling, I beg you will make some excuse for a woman almost crazed with misfortune.”³²

Several months later Lincoln found it possible to yield to the importunities of his beloved sister-in-law and ordered General Grant to allow her to take north her six hundred bales of cotton; and there is no evidence that her tragic letter diminished in any way his warm affection for her. Mary Lincoln, however, never forgave Emilie for her “minnie bullets” and “more favored relations” letter. Never during the remaining seventeen years of her life, filled as it was with so many other misfortunes, would she consent to see Emilie again; nor did she ever answer any of her letters.³³

During the turbulent weeks just preceding the election the speeches of certain McClellan advocates had become so menacing to the government that General Burbridge arrested Lieutenant Governor Jacobs and John B. Huston, senior member of the prominent Lexington law firm of Huston & Downey and an acquaintance of Lincoln. Now that the campaign was over, the friends of these so-called Copperheads strenuously sought their release through influential persons in Kentucky. On November 9 Governor Bramlette sent the President an indignant telegram in which he advised him that Huston had been arrested “for no other reason than opposition to your re-election.” On the following day the governor received Lincoln’s droll response:

Washington, D. C., Nov. 10 1864.

Gov. Bramlette
Frankfort, Ky.

Yours of yesterday received. I can scarcely believe that Gen. Jno. B. Houston has been arrested "for no other offence than opposition to my re-election" for if that had been deemed sufficient cause for arrest, I should have heard of more than one arrest in Kentucky on election day. If however, Gen. Houston has been arrested for no other cause than opposition to my re-election, Gen. Burbridge will discharge him at once, I sending him a copy of this as an order to that effect.

A. Lincoln.³⁴

On the same day General Burbridge wired Bramlette: "When the civil authorities make no effort to suppress disloyalty, the military must and will," and next day he replied to the President's telegram, advising that Huston had been arrested not because of his opposition to Lincoln but because his "influence & speeches have been of a treasonable character . . . after several warnings. . . . A vigorous policy against rebel sympathizers in this State must be pursued," said General Burbridge.³⁵

About this time Clarence Prentice quarreled with another Confederate officer and shot him dead in the lobby of a Richmond hotel. Upon receiving the news, the editor of the *Louisville Journal* caught the next train for Washington to obtain a pass to visit Clarence, who was held in jail by the civilian authorities. Prentice had unceasingly wielded a poison pen against the man in the White House in the recent campaign and thus had done much to throw the electoral vote of the President's native state to McClellan—who received only those of Kentucky, Delaware, and New Jersey—but the unvindictive Lincoln now saw only another father in distress over his son, and Prentice was soon on his way south.³⁶

As for Dr. Breckinridge, his joy at Lincoln's victory and the loyal support of his home city was clouded by an impending tragedy in his own family. Early in October he had fallen

from his horse at his country estate, and for a time his injuries were thought to be fatal. But the Doctor clung as tenaciously to life as he did to the Union, and for two weeks preceding the election, though confined to his bed, he directed the final preparations for battle at the polls.

Early one morning, just after General Burbridge and three Lexington civilians had left a political conference at Dr. Breckinridge's bedside, four Confederate officers rode out of a thicket, hitched their horses to the back fence, and entered the house. Colonel Robert J. Breckinridge, Jr., had not seen his father for four years. Major Theodore Steele, a son-in-law, was hungry for the sight of his wife, who recently had been permitted by the military authorities to return to the Doctor's tender care.

"Father," exclaimed the young Confederate colonel as he rushed into the sick room, "I heard you were fatally injured. I have ridden eighty miles without drawing bridle, to embrace you once more," and in another moment the old patriot and his long absent rebel son were locked in each other's arms.³⁷

After breakfast, realizing the fearful risk of being within the Union lines, the party left "Braedalbane." They had proceeded, however, only a short distance from Lexington when Major Steele was captured by Union troops near the town of Cynthiana and hurried off to prison at Louisville.³⁸

Almost immediate pressure was brought to bear upon Dr. Breckinridge to secure his release, but the Doctor sadly shook his head. "The distress of my daughter breaks my heart," said he, "but the fact that Major Steele is my son-in-law, to whom I am personally devoted, entitles him to no more consideration than any other rebel soldier."

The incident was thus closed until Breckinridge learned on the day before the election that the officer in command at Louisville had ironed Major Steele, put him in solitary confinement, and was preparing to court-martial and hang him as a guerrilla spy. With his daughter and his grandchildren frantic at the sudden turn of affairs, the Doctor began a lengthy, heated correspondence with the Union military authorities. Indignantly he pointed out that Major Steele was dressed in

the full uniform of a Confederate officer at the time of his capture and that by all the rules of civilized warfare his status ought to be nothing more nor less than a prisoner of war.

The official in charge replied that Steele had entered the Union lines "in obedience to a C. S. A. War Department order"; that he had been "recruiting within and forwarding recruits from our lines for the so-called Confederate States of America"; and that he was an associate of "Mose Webster, a notorious scoundrel, who had stolen \$2,000.00 from Tunis at Williamstown."³⁹ Finding the authorities obdurate and firm in their determination to have the major tried as a spy, Breckinridge roundly denounced them, served notice that he would appear as Steele's counsel at the court-martial, and turned to Lincoln for assistance.

On December 18, 1864, Judge Goodloe and a delegation from Lexington arrived at the White House and placed in the President's hands a sealed communication from Dr. Breckinridge. The contents of that document are not known, but when Lincoln had read it half through, he picked up his pen, wrote rapidly for a few seconds, and handed a folded paper to the spokesman, Charles Egenton.

On the next mail the old Doctor received a note from the committee that brought relief to his anxious household. "The President," wrote Egenton, "gave me a paper written by himself of which I enclose you a copy. I am to use the original whenever necessary to prevent the execution of any sentence until he can act and which he *assured me would be favorable to your wishes*."⁴⁰ And on January 22 word was received that the charges against Major Steele had been withdrawn and his status fixed as an ordinary prisoner of war.

These days the President's time was increasingly occupied with applications for pardons, paroles, passes through enemy lines, and other appeals for executive consideration. To one like Lincoln, who so hugely enjoyed the grotesque spelling and whimsical exaggerations of Artemus Ward, Petroleum V.

Nasby, and others of that school of humorists, the following petition from a doughty, battle-scarred old Kentuckian, with its solemn, unabashed, and uninhibited recital of the most unusual and thrilling personal valor, doubtless had strong appeal. It read:

To the Honorable Abraham Lincoln President of the United State,
at Washington D. C.

The Undersigen respectfully Petition your Honer That Some 12 Month ago My Gran Sons William Bradley & Van Fulgium was captured by the Federal Soldiers—and are at this time in Prisen at Camp Morton Ind. at the time they wer capturd they wer on there way home, having Served out there time in the Rebble Armeey—and was likely to be conscripted which they were vary much opposed to. They are vary desieras to take the Amnesta Oathe give bond and return home and live quiet Sitizens. They are the Grand Children of the Old Hero that Served his Cuntry in the War of 1812. Four companies to rescue the Bleeding Fruntiers of Michigan and Ohio—While Indians was a yeling around my Ears like Ten thousand wild Panthers in the woods Swearing in Indian Language that they would have my Scalp or hiar before day—or make there Hatchets drunk in my Blood—but bore It with corage and fortitude. I foute the First Battle at Tipacano and the Second Battle at the River Reasen then drove the Indians from there to detroite—then across the river to Canida, then drove Proctor & Elliott from Mauldin to Moravintown—then I Shouted Triumph victory over Proctor & Elliott's and Tecumseh's Whole forse. I hope [helped] Kill Tecumseh and hope Skin him and brot Two pieces of his yellow hide home with me to My Mother & Sweet Hart. After a few days rest—there was a call for volunteers to defend N Orleans I Volunteerd at the first Tap of the drum under the Immortal Andrew Jackson—I Faught the Battle of the 8th January & was wounded—there we Throud them Head and Heels cross an file, they coverd 10 Acres with death Blood and Wounds, and Sent them Home to old England which made a mash of Lord Wellington Army—I had one poore boy fell in defens of his country in Mexico—in this unholy War I took a bold Stand to put down this rebellion on every stump I Mounted—I have one Son in the Union Army has Served 3 years & Volenteerd for 3 more 58 Redg Ind—woods division—also 3 Grand

Children in the Same Redgment—all of which is respectfully submit to your Honorable consideration—

Tarrance Kirby⁴¹

At the end of this remarkable document many of the outstanding citizens of Warren County, Kentucky, had subscribed to the "patriotism, integrity and veracity of Capt. T. Kirby, the old soldier of 1812." And although no record has been found relating to these prisoners or to any executive action taken with respect to them, it is safe to assume that this unique plea of the "Old Hero" did not fall on deaf ears.

On his last birthday—February 12, 1865—the President sat wearily in his office waiting for his former postmaster general, Montgomery Blair, who had sent him a note requesting an after-dinner appointment. Presently Blair came in, and after an exchange of greetings with his old chief, he inquired about the conference with the Confederate commissioners in Hampton Roads, from which Lincoln had recently returned.

The President recited at length what had occurred and concluded by saying that since Jefferson Davis had refused to permit his commissioners to discuss any matters which did not recognize the "permanent dissolution of the Union," the conference had ended in failure and the war must go on. The President was extremely sad, and after he had finished, he sat gazing into the open fire—lost in one of his fits of gloom.

Just then they heard Lincoln's eleven-year-old son—merry, mischievous, warmhearted little Tad—climbing the long, winding stairway and singing at the top of his shrill, childish voice:

Old Abe Lincoln,
A rail splitter was he,
And that's the way
He'll split the Confedersee.

The President looked up, and a twinkle crept into his tired, gray eyes. "I reckon that's another ditty Sergeant Stimmel has taught him," he explained.

Then, as Lincoln's features grew grave again, Blair quickly approached the purpose of his appointment. He said that during the previous week he had called at the White House, and finding Lincoln not yet back from the Hampton Roads conference, he had left with Secretary Hay a heart-rending letter from a Kentucky woman who urgently requested a pass to Richmond. She was the granddaughter of Lincoln's old friend, Judge George Robertson of Lexington, Kentucky. Blair said he knew the President had been very busy since his return, but he hoped the letter had been read and that the pass could be issued without further delay.

Lincoln said he had been busy but, as it now seemed, to no very good purpose. He then told Blair in confidence that feeling that the war, whenever it ended, would leave the South prostrate and financially ruined, he had proposed to his cabinet that \$400,000,000 be appropriated to pay it for loss of its slaves. The cabinet, however, had emphatically and unanimously rejected the proposal.

As to the pass Blair requested, Lincoln said the matter was not as simple as it seemed. Grant was now tightening his operations around Petersburg, the key outer defense of Richmond, and to maintain the utmost secrecy of movements, all passes through the Union lines had been revoked by executive order. The Kentucky woman, Lincoln went on to say, as represented to him had been an ardent partisan of the South—so active, in fact, that General Burbridge had seen fit to send her with the Desha family to Canada for a while.

The fact that she had made this application to go south was already known and was now being bitterly opposed not only by the War Department but also by prominent Unionists in Kentucky, who pointed out that she might be the bearer of important messages from the Confederate colony in Canada to Richmond authorities. They also called attention to the fact that her husband's uncle, General Charles W. Field, now commanded the largest and best division in Lee's army.

"Those people down there may be wrong—probably are

wrong about her, but I've got to work with them whenever I can," said the President as he fumbled among the papers on his desk. He picked up a tear-stained letter written in a delicate, feminine hand, which read:

Versailles, Woodford Co., Kentucky
February 1st, 1865

To His Excellency, President Lincoln

I entreat you in the name of our merciful God to grant this petition of a bereaved and desolate woman, the agony of whose heart words are inadequate to express, but who derives courage to urge her plea from the painful and distressing circumstances surrounding her.

My husband, Maj. Willis F. Jones, Adgt. Genl. of Field's Division of the Confederate army was killed in battle before Richmond on the 13th of October last. I have been separated from him for two long years, during which time I have experienced almost every conceivable trial—the most severe of which resulted from the unsuccessful application made in my behalf to the War department by many of the most eminent military and professional men of this state for permission for me to visit him, during a dangerous and protracted illness.

I now address your Excellency—and entreat you to grant me the privilege of going to Richmond—that I may visit his tomb, and the friends who attended his last moments, and receive his personal effects which are of sacred and inestimable value to me; and also permission to bring back from the South his man servant, whom I desire to manumit in consideration of his fidelity to his master.

I am anxious to go as soon as practicable, and only wish to remain a week or ten days. I will, of course, give my parole of honor, or subscribe to an oath not to convey to or from the South any information prejudicial to the Federal army.

My husband, although an enemy to the Federal cause, was a noble, brave and gallant man, who in sacrificing his life to his principles, has afforded your Excellency the opportunity, in answering this prayer, of displaying your magnanimity to his heart broken widow. And I implore you to do so by granting me the required "permit" to pass through Fortress Monroe; and to return again within the Federal lines, with every assurance that no pos-

sible injury can result to your cause, and that you will receive the enduring gratitude of a sorrowing heart.

Very Respectfully,

Martha M. Jones.⁴²

As Lincoln looked up from his study of the application, Blair handed him the open case of a daguerreotype. "This is a picture of Martha Jones," said Blair. "I believe you will agree with me that it shows a grief-stricken, harmless woman, if there ever was one."

The President looked somberly at the likeness of a sad-faced young mother with a small child standing forlornly by her side. "That is Major Jones' daughter, I suppose?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir," replied Blair, "that is Nellie, their youngest child. Her father was afraid she might forget him before he saw her again."

Lincoln laid the picture carefully on his knee. He removed his battered old spectacles and slowly rubbed the lenses with a huge, blue-figured bandanna.

"And he never saw her again," he said, repeating it once or twice, softly, compassionately, to himself.

The President stared meditatively into the fire, without further comment, for what seemed to Blair a very long time. Then he turned to his desk and penned on a white card one of the few writings done by him on his last birthday. "Allow Mrs. Willis F. Jones to pass our lines with ordinary baggage, go South & return. A. Lincoln. Feb. 12, 1865."

When the two men stood up to say good-by, they saw that Tad at some time during the conference had quietly slipped unnoticed into the back of the room and stretched himself out, as he frequently did, on the big hair-covered sofa in the corner. Months ago the stern, gruff old secretary of war, yielding to the whim of this appealing child, had commissioned him a lieutenant of volunteers and had him fitted with a regular uniform and equipment. Now the boy lay there sound asleep, his small saber hugged tightly against the brass buttons

of his blue coat, his forage cap tilted back from his tousled brown hair.

"God bless you, Mr. President," said Blair, grasping the hand of his old chief in what was to be a last, warm clasp. They would not see each other again.

"And you also, my good friend, and all our widows and orphans wherever they may be tonight," replied Lincoln fervently.

Then the commander-in-chief of the Union armies gathered his drowsy little lieutenant—sword and all—in his long, sinewy arms and carried him gently out the wide doorway and down the dark, silent corridor.⁴³

The winter was drawing to a close as Abraham Lincoln performed his last act of mercy for a native son of the Bluegrass State. Lieutenant Waller R. Bullock of Lexington, a relative of General Morgan, had been shot at Mount Sterling, left for dead on the battlefield, and captured by the Union troops. When able to travel, though weak and suffering from his wounds, he had been removed to the Union military prison at Johnson's Island, near Sandusky, Ohio.

Early in February, 1865, John Bullock, a lad of fifteen years, then in Baltimore, learned from an exchanged Confederate officer that his brother Waller was critically ill, but that he did not want their invalid mother to know of his condition. The officer expressed the belief that Lieutenant Bullock would not live many more weeks in prison.

Not knowing which way to turn for advice and thinking only of the desperate necessity for his brother's immediate release, John caught the next train for Washington. As he walked down the street from the depot in the drizzling rain, he realized for the first time how vague and indefinite his plans were. He must have a parole for his dying brother. But how was it to be obtained? In all this dreary, warworn city there was only one person whom he knew. Montgomery Blair, a native of Kentucky, was a distant relative of his mother

and had been a classmate of his father in Transylvania University at Lexington. It occurred to John that aid might be obtained from this source, and without much difficulty the Blair residence was soon located.

The doorbell was answered by the former postmaster general himself, who received the son of his old friend with kindly interest. But when the boy rather hurriedly explained his mission and stated that he would be grateful for any assistance in obtaining a parole from Lincoln, Blair's cordial attitude quickly changed.

"Such a request to the President would be altogether useless," he said emphatically. "I can assure you that there are many members of Congress and others in high authority who would be glad to have their friends and relatives released from prison on such terms as you ask, but are unable to accomplish it. Come," he continued, "take your lunch with us, and then go out and see some of the sights of Washington; and I assure you that it will be time far more profitably spent than in seeking an interview with the President that will do you no sort of good."

John, however, had no intention of accepting the proffered hospitality. On the contrary, he was surprised and disappointed at the curt refusal to help him. But he was neither to be frightened nor dissuaded from his purpose. Hiding his chagrin as best he could, he thanked Blair and set out alone toward the Executive Mansion where, as he had been informed, President Lincoln was holding a morning levee. He did not know what a Presidential reception was like, but he was determined somehow to obtain an introduction to Lincoln.

On this public occasion there seemed to be no difficulty in obtaining entrance to the mansion. People came and went apparently as they pleased. The levee was in full swing. From the East Room the Marine Band played a stirring march. In the Blue Room the President, without formal introduction, was shaking hands with the passing throng. A short distance away Mrs. Lincoln and the wives of several members of the

cabinet were engaged in lively conversation with a group of army and navy officers of high rank.

Suddenly the music ceased, and the shuffling line of handshakers came to a momentary halt in the corridor just outside the Blue Room. According to arrangement, it would move forward again when the band struck up another piece.

Lincoln stood in the center of the room alone, his big hands clasped in front of him, his head slightly bowed and a faraway look in his deep-set eyes. Here John saw his chance, and in another moment, forgetting his embarrassment, he was beside the tall, solitary figure.

"Mr. President," he said, "I am the son of Rev. Dr. Bullock, of Lexington, Kentucky, and I have come to ask you to parole my brother, Waller R. Bullock, who is a Confederate lieutenant, now in prison at Johnson's Island, wounded and sick." He paused rather breathlessly.

Lincoln looked down into the anxious upturned face. "You are a nephew of John C. Breckinridge, ain't you?" he inquired loud enough to attract the attention of Mrs. Lincoln and the nearby group.

"Yes, sir," John replied.

"Then I suppose," drawled the President with a quizzical look in his gray eyes, "when you are old enough you will be going down to fight us."

"Yes, sir," came the frank answer, "I suppose when I am old enough I will join the army."

With an amused expression on his furrowed face, Mr. Lincoln placed a hand on the boy's shoulder. "My son," he said in a fatherly way, "you come back here at four o'clock this afternoon, and I will see you then."

At that moment the band started up again, the marching line moved in between them, and the President was once more occupied with the arduous task of handshaking.

As the boy, much elated at his success, passed out of the corridor, he spoke to the doorkeeper at the main entrance about his appointment with the President at four o'clock, but

his heart sank as that official replied: "He just said that to keep from hurting your feelings, young fellow, for I have positive orders from Mr. Lincoln in person to close these doors at two o'clock sharp, and not allow anybody to come in—not even members of the Cabinet."

This statement of the guard gave John several hours of anxiety, but his confidence in Lincoln's word was fully rewarded when he found himself at the designated hour sitting before a large open fire in the President's study. In a few moments Lincoln came in. Quietly closing the door, he pushed an easy chair near the fireplace, sat down with his long legs stretched out, and leaned his elbow on the arm of the chair nearest the waiting lad. "My son," he said, "what can I do for you?"

"Mr. President," replied the boy, looking earnestly into the kindly, rugged face, "I have come to ask you to parole my brother, Lieutenant Waller R. Bullock, from Johnson's Island, where he is sick and wounded. He is not expected to get well and I want you to release him so that he may be brought home to die."

Lincoln stroked his bearded cheek. "Will your brother take the oath?" he asked.

John had felt that this question was coming. It was one that he dreaded. Yet it must be met squarely and truthfully at all cost. The boy's chin quivered slightly as he sat very straight in his chair. "No sir," he replied, "he will not. He will have to die in prison if that is the only way he can get out."

"Then I can not parole him," said the President decisively. "I should like to do so, but it is impossible unless he will take the oath."

"But, Mr. President," John urged, "you do not know how ill my brother is. He is too sick to stand any longer exposure there on that island this cold winter."

"My son, I should like to grant your request," Lincoln repeated, "but I can not do it. You don't know what pressure is brought to bear upon me in such matters." He then related, as had Blair, but more in detail, how senators and other per-

sons of prominence and influence had on many occasions urged him to parole relatives and friends without requiring them to take the oath of allegiance to the Union government, but he had refused to do so in every instance.

As the boy listened closely to this recital, he wondered how he could have ever thought it possible to succeed where men in high places had so utterly failed. Zeal to obtain his brother's release had made him forget that he was just a lad without friends in a strange city. He realized it now as a wave of homesickness surged over him. With a lump in his throat he stood up to go, but as he did so he saw through the tears that blurred his vision something in the President's sad, patient face that gave him a glimmer of hope. He resolved to try once more.

"Mr. Lincoln," he pleaded, "these others have not been cases of life or death. It would be a great comfort to our invalid mother to have him brought home so that she can watch over him until he dies. You are the only person who can do this for her no matter what people say or think. Won't you please let him go home to mother?"

This time the President did not reply. With elbows on his knees and head in his hands, he sat in deep meditation. Then, just as John began to think that his presence had been forgotten, Lincoln sprang to his feet and struck the desk a resounding whack with his fist.

"I'll do it," he exclaimed, "I'll do it."

Quickly he stooped down, picked up a small, blank visiting card from the desk, and then deliberately wrote a few lines on it.

"That'll fetch him. That'll fetch him," said Mr. Lincoln, with a smile, as he delivered the precious bit of pasteboard into John's eager hands. It was an order directing that Lieutenant Waller R. Bullock be forthwith and unconditionally released and allowed to go home and remain there until well enough to be exchanged.

After expressing his gratitude as best he could, the boy was about to go, when the President sat down again in his easy



THE TOMB OF HENRY CLAY. *Courtesy of J. Winston Coleman, Jr.*



THE KENTUCKY DELEGATION TO ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S FUNERAL.. Original photograph owned by author

chair and, throwing himself into a comfortable position, began to ask questions about old friends back in Kentucky. In a reminiscent vein Lincoln spoke of the many happy days that he had spent in the Bluegrass and of an occasion when for several weeks he had been a guest of John's grandfather Bullock at his plantation near Lexington. One of the persons whom he mentioned particularly was the boy's uncle, John C. Breckinridge.

"Do you ever hear from your Uncle John?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," young Bullock replied. "We hear once in a while from prisoners coming through on special exchange; and sometimes we have been able to receive letters by way of City Point by flag of truce."

"Well," said the President thoughtfully, "I was fond of John and I was sorry to see him take the course he did. Yes, I was fond of John and I regret that he sided with the South." He paused and that faraway look came into his eyes again. "It was a mistake," he added slowly.

A few moments later, John bade Lincoln good-by on the White House portico, and the tall figure stood watching the lad until he disappeared beyond the flickering gas lights along the driveway.⁴⁴

On Washington's birthday word reached the office of the provost marshal of Woodford County that the rebel colonel, Robert J. Breckinridge, Jr., was at the residence of Harry Onan, grandson of Abraham Lincoln's great-uncle, Thomas Lincoln, a few miles from Versailles. The marshal with seven men from Lieutenant Boyd's company of state guards went to the residence, surrounded the house, and Captain Macey inquired of Onan if Colonel Breckinridge was there. Onan replied in the negative. The captain, however, insisted upon searching the premises and found Colonel Breckinridge in full uniform comfortably seated in the parlor talking with Mrs. Onan. On entering the room, Captain Macey said, "Colonel Breckinridge, you are my prisoner." Thereupon Mrs.

Onan jumped to her feet and in a voice quivering with indignation declared as she drew a pistol from a jacket she was wearing, "The Colonel shall not surrender to any of Lincoln's minions."

At this point the colonel gallantly stepped between the Union officer and his militant hostess and quietly surrendered. He was taken to Frankfort, and when he was searched, an order was found from John C. Breckinridge, secretary of war at Richmond, directing Colonel Breckinridge to notify all Confederate soldiers in Kentucky who were absent without leave to return immediately to their respective commands, under penalty of being turned over to the United States "to be treated as guerrillas." A few days later Colonel Breckinridge was released on parole.⁴⁵

On March 4, 1865, from the east portico of the Capitol, Abraham Lincoln again took the oath as President of the United States. As he arose to deliver that touching prose poem, the second inaugural, proclaiming "Malice toward none; with charity for all," a shaft of sunlight shot through the low-hanging storm clouds and rested like a benediction upon his weary, stooped shoulders.

The Confederacy was doomed. Slowly, grimly, inexorably the Union armies were closing in upon Richmond. Grant was storming the ramparts of Petersburg; Thomas was severing the Confederate communications westward; Sheridan was galloping for the last time up the valley of the Shenandoah; and Sherman was swinging northward from Charleston with his veteran legions that had marched to the sea.

Then upon the morning of April 9 Lee surrendered his starved, ragged, worn-out heroes at Appomattox, and wild, hysterical rejoicing swept the North. From Lexington, Joseph Breckinridge wrote, "We have had the anvil chorus all day and now the cannon are trying their style, bells erratically interspersing their clangorous joy."⁴⁶ "Our city presented on Monday a stirring appearance from early morning throughout

the day," said the *Observer*. "Bells were ringing, cannon firing, and flags flying from business as well as private houses, whilst the streets were thronged with a moving multitude, rejoicing over the prospect of Peace. At night the city was brilliantly illuminated throughout. All of the public buildings and most of the private dwellings were lighted up in a magnificent manner. It was perhaps the finest exhibition of the kind ever witnessed here."⁴⁷

On the evening of the eleventh a crowd celebrating the end of the war called at the White House, and Lincoln, standing on the balcony, with little Tad holding a lamp beside him, responded in a short happy speech, full of fraternity and goodwill toward the southern states. "Finding themselves safely at home," he said, it was "utterly immaterial whether they had ever been abroad."

But the Lexington *Observer* saw nothing to praise in the President's speech. It had proclaimed the war a failure, had vigorously supported McClellan until suppressed, and was implacably anti-Lincoln through and through. In the early morning hours of Saturday, April 15, 1865, a light shone dimly through the grimy windows of the *Observer's* office on Cheapside. Within spitting distance of the fireplace streaked with tobacco juice, a sallow, ink-besmeared printer, with a soiled apron of bed ticking tied about his waist, was feeding large sheets of blank paper into a cylinder press turned by a long crank in the hands of a muscular Negro. As fast as the moist sticky pages emerged from the machine the "printer's devil" dried and piled them carefully on a nearby bench and weighted them down with a polished brick. The *Observer* was going to press with the last attack that it would ever make upon Abraham Lincoln.

On the third page an editorial ridiculed the President's recent response to the White House serenaders: "The speech touches the general subject of reconstruction; and this is handled in the characteristic manner of the speaker. He commits himself to nothing—covers up his foot-prints as fast as he makes

them—utters odd similes—deals in meaningless generalities, and finally leaves the reader in a perfectly stupid state of bewilderment as to what his views really are.”⁴⁸

The telegraph office had not yet opened and the waking city could not know that Abraham Lincoln was beyond the reach of further calumny and abuse. In a little rear room of a cheap, humble lodginghouse on Tenth Street in Washington, surrounded by nurses, physicians, members of the cabinet, and friends, the President lay upon a narrow cot diagonally, to accommodate his great length. He was wholly unconscious from a pistol wound in the back of the head, but seemed not altogether insensible to pain, as he moaned faintly now and then. His loud breathing was accompanied at times by a struggling motion of his long, bare, muscular arms. In the earlier hours the heart action had been strong and regular, but as the night wore on it faltered badly. Surgeon General Barnes sat on the side of the bed with his fingers on the President's pulse. He had issued frequent bulletins throughout the night, informing the horror-stricken public of the patient's condition. At six o'clock the bulletin read: "Pulse failing," and at six-thirty: "still failing." From the hallway came the low sobbing of Mary Lincoln.

Then, as daylight crept into the dingy room, the intermittent moaning ceased, the arms became quiet, the breathing grew softer and fainter, and a look of unspeakable peace came over the seamed and careworn face. At twenty-two minutes and ten seconds past seven o'clock General Barnes removed his hand from the President's wrist and gently closed the lid of his watch—Abraham Lincoln was dead.

Secretary Stanton walked over to the sagging little door that opened into the back yard, which had remained ajar during the night. For a moment he stood gazing at the dreary scene outside. From leaden skies a cold rain was falling steadily. Then the grizzled old statesman turned to the bed where his chief lay with face as untroubled and serene as martyr ever wore. "Now he belongs to the Ages," sighed Stanton.

And Dr. Gurley, kneeling by the bedside, bowed his head
upon the blood-stained coverlet and prayed fervently.

The last end

Of the good man is peace. How calm his exit.
Night dews fall not more gently to the ground,
Nor weary, worn-out winds expire so soft.

ran the lines that Lincoln had marked long ago in the volume
of verse at Lexington.

Lilac Time

THE APPALLING news of Abraham Lincoln's assassination spread with crushing swiftness over the country. Dazed and grief-stricken by the catastrophe that had fallen in the very midst of tumultuous rejoicing, the battle-worn republic sadly stripped off its holiday garments and donned the sackcloth of mourning again.¹

"I have no words to express what I feel at the loss of our friend the late President," wrote a Washingtonian to Dr. Breckinridge. "Yet I cannot doubt the wisdom and goodness & favor of Him who carried Abraham Lincoln successfully through his perilous task."²

"Oh! My Brother, I do not believe you can conceive of the sorrow & indignation of this Community relative to the death of Mr. Lincoln," wrote a citizen of Baltimore. "*It surpasses all expression!* While I write it comes to us that the wretched Booth has gone to his God. Sic semper Assassins!"³

In Lexington the demonstration of grief was extensive and sincere. The Reverend Mr. Pratt sadly wrote in his diary: "Never was my moral sense so shocked nor did greater gloom

fill my mind. Lizzie, only 10 years old went out by herself & cried as if her heart was broke. . . . Lincoln's name will go down to posterity next to that of Washington—'A Prince and a great man has fallen in Israel.' God designs it for the good of the good people. Like Moses he caught a glorious view of a restored country & was taken away."⁴

"We mourn his loss deeply, we knew him personally, and to know him was to love him," said the *National Unionist*. "Kind, generous, noble, true-hearted friend of your country and of mankind, Abraham Lincoln! farewell!"⁵

Even the *Observer* now had no harsh word for the fallen chief. "Differing as we did from the deceased President, we yet do not hesitate to say that in our judgment he was a man of remarkable mental endowments and possessed many excellencies of character. The nation has seldom seen a sadder day than that on which Abraham Lincoln died at the hand of an assassin."⁶

The *Louisville Journal* said—and how well did its editor know this—"We believe that in the death of Mr. Lincoln the Rebels have lost their best friend in the administration at Washington." Prentice also reprinted on his editorial page an editorial from the leading newspaper in Richmond, Virginia:⁷ "The heaviest blow which has ever fallen upon the people of the South has descended. Abraham Lincoln, the President of the United States, has been assassinated. . . . The thoughtless and vicious may effect to derive satisfaction from the sudden and tragic close of the President's career; but every reflecting person will deplore the awful event. Just as everything was happily conspiring to a restoration of tranquility, under the benignant and magnanimous policy of Mr. Lincoln, comes this terrible blow. God grant that it may not rekindle or inflame passion again."

Albert G. Hodges, who had been on many delegations of Kentucky citizens to the White House and whose Frankfort *Commonwealth* had not always seen eye to eye with the President, said:

Not only was he one of Kentucky's sons, but he regarded his native State with a high degree of affection and did all that he could do to insure her welfare and to strengthen her in her allegiance to the Union. He invariably listened with deference to her complaints; her grievances were attentively considered, and where they in reality existed the cause was immediately removed. His political enemies were always kindly received by him and when their requests were just and proper they were promptly granted. Yet, in no loyal State had such personal abuse been heaped upon him—as a man and as a ruler he was unmercifully maligned and ridiculed and persecuted.

Even to speak of him with respect was to subject one's self to the same senseless and wicked abuse. Mr. Lincoln knew all this, but the knowledge was never admitted to his memory. It never kindled malice—it never soured the kindness of the father's heart toward his erring children. He served Kentucky faithfully and justly to the end. And when he died, she lost her best and truest friend.⁸

On Tuesday, April 18, the city council met in special session, with Mayor Wingate and Councilmen Bruce, Chrystal, Hayman, Johnson, Lee, Parrish, Spencer, Thompson, Van Pelt, and Wolf all present. The mayor stated that the object of the meeting was to take action in regard to the death of the President. Councilman Lee then offered a preamble and resolutions which were read and unanimously adopted:

Mr. Chairman:

The stern and unrelenting hand of death, which is continually reaping and gathering its harvest from the ranks of humanity, has again visited the loyal hearts of the Nation and taken away from us our most faithful and honest Chief Executive, who was so successfully laboring in the great cause of Union, Universal Liberty and Peace.

Our Nation mourns; her halls are covered with the tapestry of mourning; her council chambers have become silent; we pause in our course because the spoiler has come upon her.

To our beloved and honoured President, the messenger of death came like a thunderbolt in a cloudless sky. In the rich enjoyment of health and prosperity, with the rainbow of hope spanning the

horizon before him, and after years of unceasing labor for his country, and when about to realize the glorious result of his toils, an assassin creepingly comes, bribed no doubt, by the mad leaders of this most infernal rebellion, and, in the wickedness of his heart he places the instrument of death at the head of our President and widows the entire land.

Abraham Lincoln was a patriot, capable, earnest, enthusiastic, and full of kindness, generosity and mercy for his fellow-men. His example and power will be felt in the future history of his country. His deeds do follow after him and the world is better because he lived, and

Whereas, the Governor of our State has appointed tomorrow, Wednesday, April 19th, as a day of mourning and prayer over the sad calamity, therefore

Be it Resolved, that the citizens of Lexington be and they are hereby requested to close their places of business tomorrow, to dress their houses in mourning, and assemble at their respective churches to offer up prayer to the God of our fathers and implore His blessing to rest upon our afflicted country and guide us safely to the haven of peace,

Be it also Resolved, that the Mayor and Board of Councilmen proceed in a body to the Rev. Dr. Parsons' Church to hear a discourse on the death of our beloved President tomorrow forenoon at 11 o'clock.⁹

The council chamber was then ordered draped in mourning for thirty days, and the meeting adjourned.

Next day, while the Reverend Dr. Gurley conducted a brief, simple funeral ceremony in the East Room of the White House, Lexington paid her tribute of affection to Abraham Lincoln and tearfully bade him a long farewell. It was lilac time,¹⁰ and the fine old gardens were redolent with the fragrance of purple blossoms. The air was balmy with mellow spring sunshine. The town lay shrouded in a solemn, melancholy stillness.

Schools were adjourned, stores and other public places closed, flags hung listlessly at half-mast, business houses and private residences were festooned with broad streamers of crape. Funeral services were conducted at the various churches,

but the principal exercises were held in the historic Morrison Chapel of old Transylvania, whose walls had nurtured Jefferson Davis, Albert Sidney Johnston, John C. Breckinridge, and other leaders of the Lost Cause. A large silk flag draped the rostrum. A distant choir of many voices sang a touching dirge with the soft, shuddering accompaniment of a mammoth organ. Dr. Parsons delivered an exquisite eulogy, and the vast gathering with deep emotion joined in the majestic strains of the "Star Spangled Banner."¹¹ At noon twenty-one guns were fired from Fort Clay, and church bells tolled at intervals until evening.

But there were unhealed wounds in Lexington—places where the bitterness of the recent conflict was still evident. "We are sorry," said the *National Unionist*, "to have to record the fact that there were several large business houses of some of our citizens upon which there was no evidence, in the way of mourning emblems, of any sorrow at the death of the Chief Executive of the Nation. . . . And we suppose that they really felt no sorrow."¹²

At eight o'clock Friday morning, April 21, Abraham Lincoln, dressed in the plain black suit that he had worn at the first inaugural, started on his last long journey back home to Illinois. In a private car decked in somber trappings he lay in a mahogany casket covered with Easter lilies, roses, early magnolias, and huge wreaths of lilacs. And as the train slowly traveled westward, those who had known the President stood in groups on the streets of Lexington, or sat in the lobby of the Phoenix Hotel, and talked of Lincoln—his humorous stories, odd sayings, and droll mimicry revived forgotten memories and brought subdued chuckles and moisture to the eyes.

The ruthless march of years has wrought many changes in the Bluegrass town that Lincoln knew. Jordan's Row has vanished, and with it the ancient courthouse, the slave auction block and the forest trees along the public square. Court-day crowds gather on Cheapside no more, and the whipping post

has long since crumbled into dust. Under the gnarled oaks of the Lexington Cemetery lie John C. Breckinridge and the old Doctor, Judge Robertson, John Hunt Morgan, Major Willis F. Jones and his faithful Martha. Robert S. Todd sleeps beside a monument to his three Confederate sons: Samuel, killed at Shiloh; Alex, who fell at Baton Rouge; and David, who shed his blood at Vicksburg. Near him are his daughters, Emilie Helm and Martha White. On a green landscaped knoll rests Henry Clay; from a lofty granite pedestal his heroic statue gazes serenely down upon the peaceful wooded acres of the dead. They, like the eventful era in which they lived and bore so conspicuous a part, have long since passed from the ever-changing scene where Abraham Lincoln once was a familiar figure in the Bluegrass of his native Kentucky.

Bibliographical Notes

CHAPTER I

¹ About June 5, 1775. George W. Ranck, *History of Lexington, Kentucky . . .* (Cincinnati, Clark, 1872), 18; Lewis Collins, *History of Kentucky . . .*, rev. by Richard H. Collins (2 vols., Covington, Collins, 1874), II, 179.

² Lexington *Kentucky Reporter*, July 29, 1809.

³ "Lexington is nearly central of the finest and most luxuriant country perhaps, on earth." Gilbert Imlay, *A Topographical Description of the Western Territory of North America* (2d ed., London, Debratt, 1793), 48.

⁴ "It was unanimously resolved to perpetuate the first opposition by arms to British tyranny, by erecting in the then wilderness, a monument more durable than the pyramids of Egypt to the memory of these citizens murdered. A monument lasting as the foundations of the Universe, and also to perpetuate their own devotion to the sacred principles of Liberty. They consecrated the new town by the name of Lexington. Such was the origin of the name of the town of Lexington." *Kentucky Reporter*, July 29, 1809.

⁵ The London "Cheapside" was an open square, famous in the Middle Ages for its fairs and markets and later for its fine stores.

⁶ These are still preserved in the newspaper files of the Lexington Public Library.

⁷ J. N. McCormack (ed.), *Some of the Medical Pioneers of Kentucky* (Bowling Green, Kentucky State Medical Association, 1917), 53.

⁸ F. A. Michaux, *Travels to the West of the Alleghany Mountains . . .* (2d ed., London, Crosby, 1805), 194-97. As the traveler approached Lexington, "Everything seems to announce the comfort of its inhabitants. Seven or eight were drinking whiskey at a respectable inn where I stopped to refresh myself on account of the excessive heat." *Ibid.*, 121.

⁹ William Henry Perrin, *The Pioneer Press of Kentucky . . .* (Louisville, Filson Club, 1888), 16.

¹⁰ Lexington *Kentucky Gazette*, March 12, August 20, 1805.

¹¹ Albert J. Beveridge, *The Life of John Marshall* (4 vols., Boston, Houghton, 1916-1919), III, 291.

¹² *Kentucky Reporter*, October 24, 1808; August 12, 1809.

¹³ *Kentucky Gazette*, November 9, 1811.

¹⁴ *Kentucky Reporter*, June 27, 1812.

¹⁵ *Kentucky Gazette*, September 15, 1812.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, October 19, 23, 1813.

¹⁷ Robert B. McAfee, *History of the Late War in the Western Country* (Bowling Green, Ohio, Historical Publications Co., 1919), 295. The author owns Colonel Johnson's pistol.

¹⁸ "Society is polished and polite. They have a theater; and their balls and assemblies are conducted with as much ease and grace as they are anywhere else, and the dresses of the parties are as tasty and elegant. Strange things these in the 'back woods.'" *Niles' Weekly Register* (Baltimore, 1811-1849), VI (June 11, 1814), 250.

¹⁹ Samuel R. Brown, *The Western Gazetteer* . . . (Auburn, N. Y., Southwick, 1817), 91-95.

²⁰ "There is a distinct and striking moral physiognomy to this people; an enthusiasm, a vivacity and ardour of character, courage, frankness, generosity, that has been developed with the peculiar circumstances under which they have been placed." Timothy Flint, *Recollections of the Last Ten Years* . . . (Boston, Cummings, Hilliard, 1826), 71.

²¹ William Elsey Connelley and E. M. Coulter, *History of Kentucky*, ed. by Charles Kerr (5 vols., Chicago, American Historical Society, 1922), II, 1055.

²² *Kentucky Reporter*, June 14, 1824. Davis was at Transylvania from the autumn of 1821 until he left for West Point in August, 1824. William E. Dodd, *Jefferson Davis* (Philadelphia, Jacobs, 1907), 20.

²³ *Kentucky Reporter*, February 28, March 7, 1825.

²⁴ This original volume is now in the Foreman M. Lebold Collection, Chicago.

²⁵ When Mrs. Crawford gave this book to Herndon, she told him that this was the volume out of which "Lincoln learned his Speeches." See note of Jesse Weik and letter from Herndon to J. E. Remsburg, August 24, 1887, inserted in this book.

²⁶ "Lexington is a singularly neat and pleasant town, on a little stream that meanders through it. It is not so large and flourishing as Cincinnati; but it has an air of leisure and opulence that distinguishes it from the busy bustle and occupation of that town. In the circles where I visited, literature was most commonly the topic of conversation. The window seats presented the blank covers of the new and most interesting publications. The best modern works had been generally read. . . . In effect, Lexington has taken the tone of a literary place, and may be fitly called the Athens of the West." Flint, 67-68.

CHAPTER II

¹ Abraham Lincoln thought that his grandfather was killed about 1784, but it is now known that his death occurred in May, 1786. Louis Austin Warren, *Lincoln's Parentage & Childhood* . . . (New York, Century, 1926), 4.

² Waldo Lincoln, *History of the Lincoln Family* . . . (Worcester, Mass., Commonwealth, 1923), 98.

³ Evidently a strong bond of attachment existed between these two brothers, as Abraham named his youngest son Thomas, and Thomas gave one of his own boys the name of Abraham.

⁴ Deed Book 3, Fayette County, 149.

⁵ Tax Record, 1801, Fayette County section (Kentucky Historical Society), lists "Six blacks" to Thomas Lincoln.

⁶ Thomas Lincoln had eight children: Margaret, Catherine, Abraham, George, John, David, Elizabeth, and Hannah.

⁷ Depositions of Elias Hitt, *Lincoln v. Pemberton's admx.* (File 190, Fayette Circuit Court). One regular customer of Lincoln's stillhouse has been left on record. On the back of the Pemberton note is the following notation in Lincoln's handwriting: "March 28 George Webster—2 quarts; April 2 George Webster—2 quarts; April 3 George Webster—2 quarts of whiskey."

⁸ *Thomas Lincoln v. William Dawson* (File 49, Fayette Circuit Court); *Thomas Lincoln v. John Newell* (File 145, *ibid.*); *Thomas Lincoln v. Jacob Erwin* (File 171, *ibid.*).

⁹ Lincoln to John O'Nan *et al.*, January 17, 1809, Deed Book D, Fayette County, 98.

¹⁰ Elizabeth Lincoln to Thomas Lincoln, *ibid.*

¹¹ Thomas Lincoln to Margaret O'Nan *et al.*, January 17, 1809, *ibid.*, 125.

¹² Thomas Lincoln to Margaret O'Nan *et al.*, August 15, 1809, *ibid.*, 255.

¹³ *Lincoln v. O'Nan et al.*, March 31, 1810 (File 215, Fayette Circuit Court).

¹⁴ Waldo Lincoln, 213, says of Mrs. Lincoln: "She is said to have been of German descent and to have possessed a beautiful character."

¹⁵ Deposition of Peter Warfield, December 13, 1810, *Lincoln v. O'Nan et al.*

¹⁶ Deposition of James Fleming, December 13, 1810, *ibid.*

¹⁷ *Peter Warfield v. Thomas Lincoln*, December 14, 1810 (File 227, Fayette Circuit Court).

¹⁸ Order Book H, Fayette Circuit Court, 187.

¹⁹ An execution issued against him July 3, 1815, was returned by the sheriff marked "no property found."

²⁰ William E. Barton, *The Lineage of Lincoln* (Indianapolis, Bobbs, 1929), 266.

²¹ "The plaintiff being solemnly called and failing to appear and prosecute this suit & his attorney being uninformed, it is ordered that the same be dismissed." Order Book 1, Fayette Circuit Court, 120.

²² Warfield to Captain Joseph Faulconer, June 7, 1811 (William H. Townsend Collection, Lexington, Ky.).

²³ Moore to Humphries, January 21, 1820, *Moore & Hawkins v. Thomas Lincoln* (File 464, Fayette Circuit Court).

²⁴ Order Book 4, Fayette County, 504.

²⁵ See Lincoln's letter to John Chrisman, September 21, 1860, in which he mentions, as he occasionally did in various correspondence, his great-uncle Thomas. "Thomas removed to Kentucky where he died a good while ago." Abraham Lincoln Association, *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. by Roy P. Basler (8 vols., New Brunswick, N. J., Rutgers, 1953), V, 117 (hereinafter referred to as *Works*).

CHAPTER III

¹ *Kentucky Reporter*, July 29, 1809.

² Thomas Marshall Green, *Historic Families of Kentucky* . . . (Cincinnati, Clarke, 1889), 209-10.

³ The Court of Quarter Sessions, spring of 1777, at Harrodsburg.

⁴ Green, 212.

⁵ Todd was present at the first recorded meeting of trustees of Transylvania Seminary, November 10, 1783. Trustees Book I, 1. On October 7, 1807, Henry Clay was elected to succeed General Todd, deceased. *Ibid.*, 328.

- 6 Green, 215.
- 7 Certificate from President James Blythe, April 6, 1807 (Townsend Collection).
- 8 Certificate of Thomas Bodley, February 6, 1811, *ibid*.
- 9 Certificate of George M. Bibb, February 1, 1811, and law license, *ibid*.
- 10 Deposition of Elizabeth R. Parker, July 3, 1817, *Todd's heirs v. Parker's heirs* (File 559, Fayette Circuit Court).
- 11 *Kentucky Gazette*, March 6, 1800.
- 12 Will of Robert Parker, March 4, 1800, Will Book A, Fayette County, 216.
- 13 A faded sheaf of papers, in the Townsend Collection, is styled: "Muster Roll of Captain Robert S. Todd's Company, for 1811."
- 14 Ranck, *History of Lexington*, 247.
- 15 The date of the marriage of Robert S. Todd and Eliza Parker has been hitherto unknown, due to the confusion of early marriage records in the Fayette County clerk's office. The original license was discovered only after an exhaustive search by the late Charles R. Staples and the author.
- 16 *Kentucky Reporter*, March 13, 1813.
- 17 "Never have the people of this town and its neighborhood met with a stroke so afflicting as that produced by the late battle of Raisin. . . . We have all lost a relation or friend." *Kentucky Gazette*, February 23, 1813.
- 18 *Kentucky Reporter*, March 20, 1813.
- 19 Depositions of Jane T. Breck and John McMurtry, *Todd's heirs v. Todd's admx.* (File 1389, Fayette Circuit Court).

CHAPTER IV

- 1 Data furnished by Martha B. Cheek, Lexington, great-great-granddaughter of Samuel Offutt.
- 2 Appraisal of Property of Samuel Offutt, April 19, 1831, Will Book D, Jessamine County, 311.
- 3 *Samuel Offutt v. Benjamin Ayers* (Box 60, Fayette County Court).
- 4 *Samuel Offutt v. John D. Young* (Box 290, Fayette Circuit Court); *Samuel Offutt v. William Dennison* (Box 93, *ibid.*).
- 5 Azra Offutt, "An Inaugural Thesis on Injuries and Diseases of the Head," February 20, 1826 (Library of Transylvania College, Lexington, Kentucky); statements of Mrs. Cheek.
- 6 Data in possession of Martha B. Cheek.
- 7 *Kentucky Reporter*, February 10, 1827.
- 8 Will Book D, Jessamine County, 30.
- 9 Will Book I, Jessamine County, 191.
- 10 *Kentucky Reporter*, August 5, 1829.
- 11 Statement of John Hanks, Herndon-Weik Mss. (Library of Congress).
- 12 *Ibid*.
- 13 Thomas P. Reep, *Lincoln at New Salem* (Chicago, Old Salem Lincoln League, 1927), 98.
- 14 Caleb Carman to Herndon, November 30, 1866, Herndon-Weik Mss.
- 15 *Ibid.*; Albert J. Beveridge, *Abraham Lincoln, 1809-1858* (Ms. ed., 4 vols., Boston, Houghton, 1928), I, 6.
- 16 *Herndon's Life of Lincoln . . .*, ed. by Paul M. Angle (Cleveland, World, 1949), 63.
- 17 *Ibid*.

- 18 *Ibid.*, 64.
- 19 *Kentucky Reporter*, March 2, 1831.
- 20 Benjamin P. Thomas, *Lincoln's New Salem* (New ed., New York, Knopf, 1954), 63.
- 21 R. B. Rutledge to Herndon, 1866, Herndon-Weik Mss.; William H. Townsend, *Lincoln and Liquor* (New York, Pioneers, 1934), 25.
- 22 Reep, 23.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 27; Townsend, 26-27.
- 24 William H. Herndon and Jesse William Weik, *Herndon's Lincoln: The True Story of a Great Life* (3 vols., Chicago, Belford, Clarke, 1889), I, 81.
- 25 R. B. Rutledge to Herndon, 1866, Herndon-Weik Mss.; Albert J. Beveridge, *Abraham Lincoln, 1809-1858* (2 vols., Boston, Houghton, 1928), I, 111.
- 26 Reep, 27; Carl Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln, the Prairie Years* (2 vols., New York, Harcourt, 1926), I, 137.
- 27 T. G. Onstot, *Pioneers of Menard and Mason Counties . . .* (Forest City, Ill., Onstot, 1902), 73.
- 28 Harvey Lee Ross, *Lincoln's First Years in Illinois . . .*, ed. by Rufus R. Wilson (Elmira, N. Y., Primavera, 1946), 4.
- 29 J. R. Herndon to Herndon, 1866, Herndon-Weik Mss.
- 30 R. B. Rutledge to Herndon, *ibid.*
- 31 J. R. Herndon to Herndon, May 28, 1865, *ibid.*; James Herndon to Herndon, *ibid.*
- 32 Ellis to Herndon, February, 1865, *ibid.*; *Herndon's Life of Lincoln* (Angle ed.), 97.
- 33 Sandburg, I, 174; Thomas, 67.
- 34 James Short to Herndon, July 7, 1865, Herndon-Weik Mss.
- 35 Reep, 26.

CHAPTER V

- 1 *Kentucky Gazette*, December 13, 1817.
- 2 Todd's clerical experience, fine intellect, and genial personality peculiarly fitted him for his duties in the House of Representatives, which he performed with great fidelity for nearly a quarter of a century.
- 3 Order Book 4, Fayette County, 426.
- 4 Robert Parker's children were: Mary Ann, Eliza, James P., Robert C., John, and Andrew. See *Todd's Heirs v. Parker's Heirs* (File 559, Fayette Circuit Court). In after years Mary seldom used her middle name except when signed to formal documents. See Elizabeth L. Todd *et al.* to Benjamin F. Edge, June 18, 1856, Deed Book 32, Fayette County, 409; *Todd's Heirs v. Todd's admx.* (File 1389, Fayette Circuit Court).
- 5 Duff's Scrap Book Collection of Obituaries (Lexington Public Library).
- 6 Ann Maria was named for one of Robert S. Todd's sisters. Green, *Historic Families*, 213.
- 7 *Kentucky Reporter*, July 4, July 11, 1825.
- 8 Duff's Scrap Book Collection of Obituaries.
- 9 Todd to Humphreys, February 15, 1826 (Townsend Collection).
- 10 Todd to Humphreys, October 23, 1826, *ibid.*
- 11 Todd to Humphreys, October 25, 1826, *ibid.*
- 12 *Kentucky Gazette*, November 10, 1826.
- 13 As Todd's last letter implied, Crittenden's marriage was also impending,

and two weeks later, on November 15, 1826, he married Betsy Humphrey's intimate friend, Mariah K. Todd, also of Frankfort. Mrs. Chapman Coleman, *The Life of John J. Crittenden* (2 vols., Philadelphia, Lippincott, 1871), I, 21.

¹⁴ John Ward, etc., to John S. Snead, Trustee, Deed Book 10, Fayette County, 446.

¹⁵ Elizabeth K. Smith and Mary L. Didlake, *Historical Sketch of Christ Church Cathedral* (Lexington, Transylvania, 1898), 28.

¹⁶ Elizabeth Humphreys Norris to Emilie Todd Helm, September 28, 1895 (Townsend Collection).

¹⁷ Katherine Helm, *The True Story of Mary, Wife of Lincoln . . .* (New York, Harper, 1928), 31.

¹⁸ Statements of Emilie Todd Helm to author.

¹⁹ Frankfort (Ky.) *Argus of Western America*, October 28, 1829.

²⁰ *Ibid.*; J. Winston Coleman, Jr., *Famous Kentucky Duels . . .* (Frankfort, Ky., Roberts, 1953), 69-83.

²¹ William T. Smith, Com'r to R. S. Todd, May 7, 1832, Deed Book 8, Fayette County, 133.

²² License Index I, Fayette County, 93. N. W. Edwards graduated from Transylvania May 1, 1833. Trustees Book I, 281.

²³ See obituary of Mme. Mentelle, *Lexington Kentucky Statesman*, September 14, 1860.

²⁴ "The subscriber, encouraged by a number of respectable persons, has lately removed to Lexington. He proposes with the assistance of his wife to instruct young people of both sexes in the French Language and Dancing. His terms will be moderate and those who entrust him with care of their children may rely on his attention and assiduity. He will commence teaching on the 23rd of this month. Waldemare Mentelle." *Kentucky Gazette*, July 25, 1798.

²⁵ After Mrs. Russell married Robert Wickliffe, she and her husband executed a deed to the Mentelles for this tract of "about five acres of land opposite Mr. Clay's," reciting that it had been given to them "many years since by Parole & without writing." Wickliffes to W. Mentelle & C. Mentelle, July 5, 1839, Deed Book 16, Fayette County, 484.

²⁶ All biographers, including Albert J. Beveridge, have hitherto assumed that the Mentelle institution was exclusively a French school, some stating that "only French was spoken there," but the records show otherwise. "Mrs. Mentelle wants a few more Young Ladies as Scholars. She has hitherto endeavored to give them a truly useful & 'Solid' English Education in all its branches. *French taught if desired*. Boarding, Washing & Tuition \$120.00 per year, paid quarterly in advance. 1½ miles from Lexington on the Richmond Turnpike road." *Lexington Intelligencer*, March 6, 1838.

²⁷ Elizabeth Humphreys Norris to Emilie Todd Helm, September 28, 1895 (Townsend Collection).

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Todd served as clerk from December 5, 1814, to December 28, 1835. Kentucky House of Representatives, *Journal*, 1835-1836.

³⁰ Todd purchased his liquor sometimes by the quart, but usually in case lots or by the barrel. See Robert S. Todd's account with Robert Fleming, Walker Kidd, Dudley & Carty, Swift & Robbins, E. A. Tilford & Co., from 1827 to 1849. Also Deposition of William Leavy, filed in the settlement of the Todd estate (File 1389, Fayette Circuit Court).

³¹ C. M. Clay, "John Jordan Crittenden," in *Lexington Daily Press*, November 14, 1871.

³² Gustave Koerner, *Memoirs of Gustave Koerner, 1809-1896* . . . (2 vols., Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Torch, 1909), I, 349.

³³ *Ibid.*, 347.

³⁴ April 9, 1831; James Speed, *James Speed, a Personality* (Louisville, Morton, 1914), 9.

³⁵ K. Helm, 73.

³⁶ Elizabeth Humphrey Norris to Emilie Todd Helm, September 28, 1895 (Townsend Collection).

³⁷ "Monsieur Giron's splendid saloon is attended by the wealthy and fashionable citizens." Julius P. Bolivar MacCabe, *Directory of the City of Lexington and County of Fayette, for 1838 & '39* . . . (Lexington, Noble, 1838).

³⁸ William Kavanaugh Doty, *The Confectionery of Monsier Giron* (Charlottesville, Va., Michie, 1915).

³⁹ Statement of Dr. A. T. Parker to the author, February 3, 1919.

⁴⁰ K. Helm, 43-44.

⁴¹ William H. Townsend, *Lincoln the Litigant* (Boston, Houghton, 1925), 71.

⁴² "Separate answer of George R. C. Todd," *Todd's Heirs v. Todd's admx.* (File 1389, Fayette Circuit Court).

⁴³ Mary Todd Lincoln to Abraham Lincoln, May —, '48 (Illinois State Historical Society).

⁴⁴ Samuel D. McCullough Ms. (Lexington Public Library).

CHAPTER VI

¹ Lincoln to Samuel D. Marshall, November 11, 1842, *Works*, I, 304-305.

² Henry C. Whitney, *Life on the Circuit with Lincoln* . . . (Boston, Estes and Lanriat, 1892), 94-97.

³ Lincoln to Richard S. Thomas, February 14, 1843, *Works*, I, 707.

⁴ K. Helm, *Mary, Wife of Lincoln*, 41; Clay, "John Jordan Crittenden," in *Lexington Daily Press*, November 14, 1871.

⁵ *Works*, I, 74-76.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 271-79.

⁷ William E. Barton, *The Life of Abraham Lincoln* (2 vols., Indianapolis, Bobbs, 1925), I, 101.

⁸ Order Book 6, p. 311, Fayette County clerk's office.

⁹ Brown, *Western Gazetteer*, 91.

¹⁰ These occurrences became so frequent that a local editor strongly voiced his disapproval. *Lexington Western Luminary*, June 5, 1833; Ivan E. McDougale, *Slavery in Kentucky, 1792-1865* (Lancaster, Pa., New Era, 1918), 19.

¹¹ Elizabeth Humphreys Norris to Emilie Todd Helm, September 28, 1895 (Townsend Collection).

¹² K. Helm, 38-40.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Robert S. Todd purchased a lot adjoining his residence from Judge Turner. Fielding L. Turner and Caroline A. Turner to Robert S. Todd, Deed Book I, Fayette County, 150.

¹⁵ McDougale, 91.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*; *Commonwealth of Kentucky, Plff. v. Caroline A. Turner, Deft.* (File 899), Order Book 20, Fayette Circuit Court, 323.

¹⁷ McDougale, 91-92.

¹⁸ Mrs. Samuel Harrison Smith, *The First Forty Years of Washington Society*

. . . , ed. by Gaillard Hunt (New York, Scribner, 1906), 128; Leland Winfield Meyer, *The Life and Times of Colonel Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky* (New York, Columbia, 1932), 293.

¹⁹ Letter of Thomas Henderson, in Washington (D. C.) *Globe*, July 7, 1835.

²⁰ Reminiscences of Ebenezer Stedman, written to his daughter, Sophia Cox (Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort).

²¹ Danville *Kentucky Tribune*, September 22, 1843; Meyer, 422.

²² Reprint from *Louisville Journal* in *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, July 8, 1835.

²³ Richard M. Johnson to Rev. Thomas Henderson, February 26, 1836, Johnson Mss. (Filson Club, Louisville, Kentucky).

²⁴ *Kentucky Reporter*, April 21 to June 9, 1830.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, August 4, 1830.

²⁶ William Birney, *James G. Birney and His Times . . .* (New York, Appleton, 1890), 132.

²⁷ Certificate of Thomas B. Megowan, 1840, Fayette Circuit Court.

²⁸ Kentucky General Assembly, *Acts*, 1832-1833, chap. 223, approved February 2, 1833.

CHAPTER VII

¹ "If asked for what I consider the most influential and potent influence that ever came into Lincoln's life in Illinois, I would unhesitatingly reply, 'newspapers.'" Henry B. Rankin, *Intimate Character Sketches of Abraham Lincoln* (Philadelphia, Lippincott, 1924), 155. "If Lincoln may be said to have done anything whatever continuously during these years . . . it was to read newspapers." Beveridge, *Abraham Lincoln*, I, 301.

² Lincoln to Dr. Lyman Beecher Todd, March 23, 1861, according to statements of Dr. Alexander T. Parker, February 3, 1919, and Captain J. R. Howard, May 1, 1922 (Townsend Collection). "She [Mary] and Mr. Lincoln pored over the Lexington paper, for which they had subscribed every year since Mary's marriage." K. Helm, *Mary, Wife of Lincoln*, 160.

³ "Upon one occasion, he spoke most enthusiastically of his profound admiration of Henry Clay, saying that he almost worshipped him." Leonard W. Volk in Henry B. Rankin, *Personal Recollections of Abraham Lincoln* (New York, Putnam, 1916), 364.

⁴ He "always Loved Hen Clay's Speeches I think was the Cause Mostly" of Lincoln being a Whig. Dennis Hanks to Herndon, March 12, 1866, Herndon-Weik Mss.

⁵ *Works*, I, 297.

⁶ Separate answer of Abraham Lincoln in *Oldham and Hemingway v. Abraham Lincoln et al.*, June 13, 1853 (File 1268, Fayette Circuit Court). The answer of Elizabeth L. Todd, admx. of Robert S. Todd in *Todd's Heirs v. Todd's admx.* (File 1389, Fayette Circuit Court), states that the total advancement made by Todd to the Lincolns during his lifetime amounted to \$1,157.50.

⁷ These slippers were for many years in the Lincoln Collection of Oliver R. Barrett, Chicago.

⁸ John C. Breckinridge to Robert J. Breckinridge, December 24, 1843, Breckinridge Mss. (Library of Congress); deposition of Robert J. Breckinridge, *Todd's Heirs v. R. Wickliffe* (File 1166, Fayette Circuit Court).

⁹ Cassius M. Clay, *The Life of Cassius Marcellus Clay: Memoirs, Writings, and*

Speeches . . . (Cincinnati, Brennan, 1886), 82-85; handbill, "To My Fellow Citizens of Fayette," August 2, 1843 (Townsend Collection).

¹⁰ Clay, 82-85.

¹¹ Order Book 29, Fayette Circuit Court, 263-64.

¹² "Henry Clay, Esquire, produced in Court a License and on his motion is permitted to practice as an Attorney at Law, in this Court, and thereupon took the several oaths by Law prescribed." March 20, 1798, Order Book A, Fayette Circuit Court, 94.

¹³ Clay, 89.

¹⁴ *Commonwealth of Kentucky v. Cassius M. Clay* (File 1084, Fayette Circuit Court).

¹⁵ *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, January 1, 1840.

¹⁶ Calvin Fairbank, *Rev. Calvin Fairbank during Slavery Times . . .* (Chicago, Patriotic, 1890), 26-34. Fairbank was for many years connected with the Underground Railroad in Kentucky. In the purchase of Eliza he represented Salmon P. Chase, later Lincoln's secretary of the treasury, and Nicholas Longworth of Cincinnati, who had authorized him to bid as high as \$25,000 if necessary. Out of his abolition activities of more than a quarter of a century, Fairbank states that the auction of Eliza was "the most extraordinary incident in my history."

¹⁷ *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, May 26, 1843, and later issues. The editor of the *Observer* had long been opposed to the sale of slaves at public auction. He contended that if it was necessary to sell Negroes other than at private sale, this should be done in the yard of the slave jails. The sale of Eliza was vividly portrayed as an illustration of the evils of public auctions. Slaveholders were warned that the "public auction-block makes many converts to abolitionism" and was therefore the greatest menace to the institution of slavery.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, May 15, 1844.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, July 20, 1844.

²⁰ H. Clay to Cassius M. Clay, *ibid.*, September 18, 1844.

²¹ "The whole heart of the man was enlisted in it." John G. Nicolay and John Hay, *Abraham Lincoln, a History* (10 vols., New York, Century, 1890), I, 223. "Clay, as he [Lincoln] said himself, was his 'beau-ideal of a statesman' and he labored earnestly and effectually as anyone else for his election." Ward H. Lamon, *The Life of Abraham Lincoln . . .* (Boston, Osgood, 1872), 274.

²² Lamon, 275.

²³ Will of Fielding L. Turner, Will Book P, Fayette County, 503.

²⁴ The newspapers spoke of Mrs. Turner's "reproving" her carriage driver, "when he seized and strangled her before she could be rescued from his murderous grasp." *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, August 24, 1844, and later issues.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, November 19, 1844.

²⁶ "There is scarcely a crime in the whole catalogue of offenses to the laws of man and God of which he has not been accused either by the Locofoco stump speakers or their newspaper organs. He is denounced by them as a Profane Swearer, a Gambler, a Sabbath Breaker, a common Drunkard, Guilty of Perjury, a Robber, an Adulterer and a Murderer." *Ibid.*, September 7, 1844.

²⁷ "Christian voters! Mr. Clay's Moral Character," Polk campaign pamphlet (J. Winston Coleman, Jr., Collection, Lexington, Ky.).

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, June 15, 1844, and later issues.

³⁰ "I have concluded for the present to try freedom," wrote Lewis to his mas-

ter after his escape, "& how it will seam to be my own Master & Manage my own Matters & crack my own Whip." Lewis to Captain Postlethwaite, October 27, 1844 (Townsend Collection).

³¹ Delia A. Webster, *Kentucky Jurisprudence: A History of the Trial of Miss Delia A. Webster at Lexington, Kentucky, Dec. 17-21, 1844* . . . (Vergennes, Vt., Blaisdell, 1845). Fairbank and Miss Webster were indicted, and on December 17, 1844, the young schoolteacher was convicted and sentenced to two years in the penitentiary. She at once petitioned the governor for a pardon, which the citizens of Lexington vigorously opposed. "There is a masculinity of character in the female fanatic of the North that will induce them to undertake almost any enterprise. . . . We insist upon the punishment of this abductionist in petticoats not only on account of the offense she has committed, but because of her sex, which she has desecrated." *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, January 11, 1845.

Fairbank pleaded guilty on February 13, 1845, and was sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment. *Ibid.*, February 15, 1845. He was pardoned by Governor Crittenden in 1849, but arrested again in 1851 for "stealing" slaves at Louisville and sent to the penitentiary to serve another term of fifteen years, where he remained until 1862. Fairbank served, in all, seventeen years and four months' imprisonment for his abolition activities in Kentucky. Fairbank, 45-59, 97-103.

³² Townsend Collection. The bitterness of the campaign is indicated by the celebration of Clay's defeat in his own home town: "On Saturday last some of the Locofocos of Lexington had a great jubilation: They commenced firing cannon, in commemoration of the defeat of their great fellow-citizen before Sunrise in the morning and kept it up with a few intermissions until after dark in the evening. Thinking, we suppose, that the report of their gun would not sound sufficiently distinct at Ashland from the usual place of firing, they selected in the afternoon a private vacant lot, belonging to a brother loco of great proximity, from whence they demonstrated their puerile spite until fatigue or something else more powerful overcame them and bade them desist." *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, November 20, 1844.

³³ "The defeat of Clay affected him . . . as a keen personal sorrow." Nicolay and Hay, I, 235.

³⁴ "For himself he had the dawning ambition of the success of the man and the policy that would settle the unadjusted and, at that time, unadjustable slavery question on the lines of a gradual extinction of the evil, as foreshadowed in one of Clay's explanatory letters, which in Lincoln's opinion, cost him the election." Robert H. Browne, *Abraham Lincoln and the Men of His Time* (2 vols., Cincinnati, Jennings & Pye, 1901), I, 285.

³⁵ "The campaign had the effect of establishing Mr. Lincoln's reputation as a political orator, on a still broader and more permanent foundation. From this time forward he was widely known as one of the soundest and most effective of Whig champions in the West." Joseph H. Barrett, *Life of Abraham Lincoln* (Cincinnati, Moore, Wiltach & Baldwin, 1864), 69.

CHAPTER VIII

¹ Article on Clay by Colonel W. C. P. Breckinridge, in *Lexington Herald*, July 24, 1903.

² C. M. Clay in Allen Thorndike Rice (ed.), *Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln by Distinguished Men of His Time* (New York, North American, 1886), 293.

- ³ *Ibid.*, 297.
- ⁴ Card from C. M. Clay, in *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, May 28, 1845.
- ⁵ *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, February 19, 1845.
- ⁶ Clay, *Life*, 106-107.
- ⁷ Springfield (Ill.) *Sangamo Journal*, March 13, 20, April 10, 17, 1845.
- ⁸ *Lexington True American*, June 3, August 19, 1845.
- ⁹ *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, July 19, 1845.
- ¹⁰ W. L. Barre (ed.), *Speeches and Writings of Hon. Thomas F. Marshall* (Cincinnati, Applegate, 1858), 127-32.
- ¹¹ *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, July 12, 1845.
- ¹² *Ibid.*
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, July 30, 1845.
- ¹⁴ Handbill, dated August 2, 1845, signed "R. Wickliffe" (Townsend Collection).
- ¹⁵ *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, August 9, 1845.
- ¹⁶ *True American*, June 17, 1845, and later issues.
- ¹⁷ The issue of July 29 announced the serious illness of the editor. "Any defect noticeable in the paper during his illness will, therefore, be attributed to the proper cause."
- ¹⁸ *Sangamo Journal*, August 28, 1845.
- ¹⁹ For full account on both sides see B. W. Dudley and others, *History and Record of the Proceedings of the People of Lexington and Its Vicinity, in the Suppression of The True American . . .* (Lexington, Virden, 1845); Cassius M. Clay, *Appeal of Cassius M. Clay to Kentucky and the World* (Boston, Macomber & Pratt, 1845). See also *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, August 12, 1845.
- ²⁰ *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, August 20, 1845.
- ²¹ *Sangamo Journal*, September 11, 1845.
- ²² *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, August 23, 1845.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, August 20, 1845. The more prominent members of the committee of sixty went through the form of a trial in Judge Trotter's court on September 18, 1845, where "after full argument, the jury, without hesitating, gave a verdict of not guilty." *Ibid.*, October 8, 1845.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, August 30, 1845.
- ²⁵ Letter written "Home" by Seward, April 26 (1846), in Frederick M. Seward (ed.), *William H. Seward: An Autobiography . . .* (3 vols., New York, Derby and Miller, 1891), I, 798; Seward to Thurlow Weed, April 26, 1846, Weed Papers (University of Rochester).
- ²⁶ Lincoln to Williamson Durley, October 3, 1845, *Works*, I, 175.

CHAPTER IX

¹ "They are not demons, nor even the worst of men; . . . generally they are kind, generous and charitable, even beyond the example of their more staid neighbors." February 22, 1842, *Works*, I, 271-79.

² Barton, *Abraham Lincoln*, I, 277.

³ During the campaign certain Whig friends raised \$200 and gave it to Lincoln for his personal expenses. After the election he handed them back \$199.25. "I did not need so much money," he explained. "I made the canvass on my own horse; my entertainment, being at the houses of friends, cost me nothing; and my only outlay was seventy-five cents for a barrel of cider that some farm hands insisted I should treat to." Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln*, I, 344.

⁴ *Works*, I, 382.

⁵ Lincoln to Speed, October 22, 1846, *ibid.*, 389.

⁶ Lincoln to Johnston, February 25, 1847, *ibid.*, 392.

⁷ "I start for Washington by way of Kentucky, on next Monday." Lincoln to Morris and Brown, October 18, 1847, *ibid.*, 406.

⁸ Beveridge, *Abraham Lincoln*, I, 398.

⁹ Townsend, *Lincoln the Litigant*, 34.

¹⁰ K. Helm, *Mary, Wife of Lincoln*, 101

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 100.

¹² "My wife was born and raised at Lexington, Kentucky, and my connection with her has sometimes taken me there, where I have heard the older people of her relations speak of your Uncle Thomas and his family." Lincoln to Jesse Lincoln, April 1, 1852, *Works*, II, 217-18.

¹³ "Many of the private dwellings have a noble, mansionlike appearance which is greatly heightened by their deep court-yards and spacious gardens." The Reverend Dr. Humphrey in *North American Review* (Boston, 1815-1940), reprinted in *Lexington Intelligencer*, June 28, 1839.

¹⁴ *Commonwealth of Kentucky v. Cassilly, a slave* (File 1164, Fayette Circuit Court); *Commonwealth of Kentucky v. Harriet*, *ibid.*

¹⁵ Letter of Elizabeth Humphreys Norris to Emilie Todd Helm, July 18, 1895 (Townsend Collection); statements of E. T. Helm to author.

¹⁶ Order Book 12, Fayette County, 61.

¹⁷ *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, November 3, 1847, and later issues.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, November 20, 1847, and later issues.

¹⁹ Theodore D. Weld (comp.), *American Slavery As It Is . . .* (New York, American Anti-Slavery Society, 1839), 38, 133.

²⁰ *Southern Cultivator* (Athens, Ga., 1843-1935), May, 1855, quoted in J. Winston Coleman, Jr., *Slavery Times in Kentucky* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1940), 188.

²¹ Alexander T. Parker to the author, February 3, 1919. The institution of court day was only recently abandoned in Lexington.

²² *William A. Leavy and Robert S. Todd v. John F. Leavy* (File 1174, Fayette Circuit Court). Judgment was rendered by the Fayette Circuit Court October 12, 1847. Todd evidently wanted to maintain his record of never having sold a slave, and he arranged with his coplaintiff to pay him his half of the judgment in cash and Leavy was to take the slaves. However, after the commissioner had reported the slaves sold to the coplaintiff, Leavy failed to pay the purchase price and they were sold at auction.

²³ *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, November 17, 1847.

²⁴ Daniel Webster had spoken at Springfield, June 19, 1837. *Sangamo Journal*, June 24, 1837.

²⁵ K. Helm, 101.

²⁶ Most of these volumes are now in the Townsend Collection. See also original inventory and sale bills of Robert S. Todd's estate, Will Book S, Fayette County, 420, 451.

²⁷ These quotations were copied by the author, March 31, 1928, from the original volume marked by Lincoln.

²⁸ Republican Club of the City of New York, *Addresses Delivered at the Lincoln Dinners, 1887-1909 . . .* (New York, Republican Club, 1909), 267; statement of George Blackburn Kinhead, nephew and namesake of Lincoln's local attorney, to author.

²⁹ Kinkad's statement.

³⁰ "We state *facts*—we *feel*, but have no language to *express* our *feelings*." Card signed by A. C. Bryan *et al.*, in *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, October 23, 1847.

³¹ Todd was chairman of the meeting held on December 6, 1847, to complete preparations for Clay's reception. *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, December 8, 1847. "Robert S. Todd, my old and faithful friend, the father of Mrs. Abraham Lincoln, was the one selected to give the address of welcome." Clay, *Life*, 164.

CHAPTER X

¹ Allen C. Clark, *Abraham Lincoln in the National Capital* (Washington, D. C., Roberts, 1925), 3.

² Lincoln to Herndon, December 13, 1847, *Works*, I, 420.

³ *Works*, I, 420-22.

⁴ *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, January 26, 1848.

⁵ *Works*, I, 465-66.

⁶ Nat Grigsby said that the night he and Lincoln slept together at Gentryville in 1844 a cat "began mewing, scratching, and making a fuss generally"; that Lincoln "got up, took the cat in his hands," and stroking its back, "gently and kindly, made it sparkle." Lamon, *Abraham Lincoln*, 275.

⁷ Illinois State Historical Library.

⁸ *Works*, I, 473-74.

⁹ *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, April 19, 1848.

¹⁰ Lincoln to Mrs. Lincoln, April 16, 1848, *Works*, I, 465-66.

¹¹ *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, April 5, 1848.

¹² *Works*, I, 495-96.

¹³ Lincoln to Herndon, June 22, 1848, *ibid.*, 490-92.

¹⁴ *Works*, I, 497.

¹⁵ The only recorded instance of Lincoln's indulgence in this diversion was in 1863, when thirty ladies, headed by the Princess Salm-Salm of Prussia, kissed him at a reception given to the President on his visit to the Third Army Corps. Mrs. Lincoln was in camp, but not present at the reception, and that night, when little Tad told her about it, General Sickles says she "gave the President a long curtain lecture" in their tent. General Daniel E. Sickles, February 12, 1910, at annual meeting of the Lincoln Fellowship.

¹⁶ Lincoln to Herndon, July 11, 1848, *Works*, I, 499.

¹⁷ Samuel C. Busey, *Personal Reminiscences and Recollections . . .* (Washington, D.C., Dornan, 1895), 26-27.

¹⁸ *Springfield Illinois Journal*, March 16, 1848.

¹⁹ Deposition of Dr. Henry Hopson, September 27, 1843, *Samuel Cook v. Parker Ottwell, Admr.* (Box 1047, Fayette Circuit Court); *Parker Ottwell, Admr., v. Samuel R. Offutt* (Box 1084, *ibid.*).

²⁰ *James Cummins, et al., v. Samuel R. Offutt* (Box 1205, Bourbon Circuit Court).

²¹ Denton Offutt, *A New and Complete System of Teaching the Horse on Phrenological Principles . . .* (Cincinnati, Appleton's Queen City Press, 1848).

²² James Hall to William H. Herndon, Baltimore, September 17, 1873, Herndon-Weik Mss.

²³ *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, August 9, 1848.

²⁴ Doyle was given twenty years in the penitentiary on one indictment. Three other charges were filed away to be reinstated at the end of his sentence. Three slaves, Shadrach, Harry, and Presley, were sentenced to death. *Ibid.*, September 6, October 11, 1848.

²⁵ Diary of William Moody Pratt, entry for August 21, 1848 (University of Kentucky Library, Lexington).

²⁶ "What further part he took in the campaign in Illinois does not appear," says Beveridge (*Abraham Lincoln*, I, 477), who evidently overlooked Lincoln's speaking schedule published in the *Illinois Daily Journal*, October 27, 1848.

²⁷ Robert S. Todd to A. Lincoln, February 20, 1849 (Robert Todd Lincoln Collection, Library of Congress).

CHAPTER XI

¹ Whitney, *Life on the Circuit*, 340.

² Kentucky House of Representatives, *Journal*, February 3, 1849.

³ Kentucky General Assembly, *Session Acts*, 1848-1849, p. 393.

⁴ Kentucky General Assembly, *Senate Journal*, 1848-1849, p. 363.

⁵ Herndon, *Lincoln*, II, 240.

⁶ Albert T. Bledsoe, son of Moses Owsley Bledsoe of Frankfort, Kentucky, and a graduate of West Point, had taught Lincoln broadsword exercises, and was one of his seconds. Beveridge, *Abraham Lincoln*, I, 349; Herndon, II, 256. Bledsoe was assistant secretary of war under Jefferson Davis. After the war he wrote a book entitled: *Is Davis a Traitor?* which the president of the Confederacy "considered one of the best books justifying our course in seceding." Inscription of Mrs. Davis in her husband's copy of Bledsoe's book now in the Townsend Collection.

⁷ Herndon, II, 248.

⁸ *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, February 17, 1849.

⁹ *Ibid.*, March 3, 1849; *Cincinnati Examiner*, March 10, 1849; *Cincinnati Chronicle*, March 6, 1849.

¹⁰ Asa Earl Martin, *The Anti-Slavery Movement in Kentucky prior to 1850* (Louisville, Filson Club, 1918), 127, 128.

¹¹ Calvin Colton (ed.), *The Private Correspondence of Henry Clay* (Cincinnati, Derby, 1856), 585.

¹² *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, April 18, June 30, 1849.

¹³ *Ibid.*, April 28, 1849.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, April 25, 1849.

¹⁵ Statement of Desha Breckinridge to the author.

¹⁶ *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, July 18, 1849.

¹⁷ Martin, 124; Green Clay to the author, March 17, 1928.

¹⁸ *Louisville Weekly Courier*, July 4, 1849.

¹⁹ *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, June 13, 1849.

²⁰ Statement of Emilie Todd Helm to the author, June 15, 1927.

²¹ *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, June 16, July 18, 1849.

²² *Louisville Weekly Courier*, July 4, 1849.

²³ *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, June 16, July 7, 18, 1849.

²⁴ "A dispatch from Lexington dated the 19th, says that Cassius M. Clay is not dead—that there are hopes of his recovery." *Illinois Daily Journal*, June 22, 1849. The citizens of Springfield were much interested in the affair. *Ibid.*, June 19-27, 1849.

25 *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, June 20, 1849.

26 Pratt Diary, entry for June 26, 1849.

27 *Lexington Morning Transcript*, August 28, 1892, for reminiscences of old citizens who survived this epidemic.

28 Breckinridge to Richard Martin, July 14, 1849, Breckinridge Mss.

29 The Lexington newspapers gave "bilious fever" as the cause of Todd's death; the *Illinois Daily Journal*, July 23, 1849, said that he died of "brain fever." However, the original itemized bills of C. C. Norton and other druggists, filed with the papers in the settlement of his estate, show that the medicine given to Todd by his physicians consisted largely of calomel, rhubarb, and opium—the standard cholera remedy.

30 *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, August 4, 1849. Describing Lexington on "fast day," the *Observer* said, "The city, it is true, presented no great difference in aspect from that which it has worn for several weeks, owing to the fatal epidemic which has been among us, producing an almost entire stagnation of business or even the appearance of it."

31 Pratt Diary, entry for August 3, 1849.

32 *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, August 1, 1849.

33 *Ibid.*, August 11, 1849.

34 Lincoln to George Robertson, August 15, 1855, *Works*, II, 317-18.

CHAPTER XII

1 Reminiscences of old survivors, in *Lexington Morning Transcript*, August 28, 1892.

2 See original will, Papers File 1849-51, Fayette County Court.

3 Order Book 12, Fayette County Court, 398.

4 Richard H. Chinn, Trustee, to Robert Wickliffe, September 12, 1827, Deed Book 33, Fayette County, 86.

5 Lincoln to Margaret Preston, August 21, 1862, *Works*, VIII, 386.

6 Lincoln to Mary Lincoln, April 16, 1848, *ibid.*, I, 465-66.

7 "Mr. Lincoln returned to this city on Thursday evening last, from a journey of business to Kentucky, which occupied his time for some three or four weeks." *Illinois Weekly Journal*, November 21, 1849.

8 "A young man of the most amiable manners and promising talents." *Kentucky Reporter*, October 14, 1822.

9 It is evident that the story of Milly and Alfred was quite generally known and discussed now and then among the older citizens of Lexington. "Dr. E. Warfield says he regrets you bringing up the yellow boy on account of Mrs. Wickliffe. He is the only man I have heard speak one word against any part of it, he approved all the rest. You know the Dr. would not seem wise unless he could make some little criticism." David Castleman to Robert J. Breckinridge, February 24, 1843, Breckinridge Mss.

10 The story of Milly and Alfred is contained in the voluminous pleadings and depositions of the record, styled: *Todd's heirs v. Robert Wickliffe* (File 1166, Fayette Circuit Court); amplified in a pamphlet entitled: *The Third Defence of Robert J. Breckinridge against the Calumnies of Robert Wickliffe* (Baltimore, Matchett, 1843), 76-77; and a pamphlet entitled: *A Further Reply of Robert Wickliffe, to the Billingsgate Abuse of Robert Judas Breckinridge, Otherwise Called Robert Jefferson Breckinridge* (Lexington, Kentucky Gazette printer, 1843), 52-56.

11 Printed copies of these testimonials of Clay, Dr. Dudley, and others in the Robert Todd Lincoln Collection.

12 Statement of Dr. A. T. Parker to the author, February 3, 1919.

13 Lincoln to W. B. Preston, November 5, 1849, *Works*, II, 66.

14 Deposition of William H. Rainey, *Todd's Heirs v. Todd's admx.* (File 1389, Fayette Circuit Court). Levi Todd had occupied this property for several years under lease from his father. Later the Lincolns and the other Springfield heirs conveyed to him their undivided four-sixth interest by deed dated June 29, 1851, Deed Book 27, Fayette County, 311.

15 Lincoln said that while he was in Lexington "in the autumn of 1849," he "was almost continuously with L. O. Todd." Lincoln to George B. Kinkead, July 6, 1853 (Townsend Collection).

16 Lincoln's sympathy extended to all forms of human oppression. Just before coming to Kentucky he had drafted a series of resolutions for the cause of Hungarian freedom. *Works*, II, 62.

17 This jail faced on Broadway and ran back to Mechanics Alley about one hundred feet from the side yard of the Todd residence. Deed from E. K. Sayre, etc., to W. A. Pullum, October 12, 1846, Deed Book 24, Fayette County, 271.

18 Robards first leased the theater property in the spring of 1849, and then in a few months he purchased it. In 1856 he failed in business and it was sold by Sheriff Waller Rodes, Lincoln's cousin by marriage, to satisfy Robards' creditors. "All that lot of land known as Robards' jail situated on Short Street . . . on which the negro jail now stands." Waller Rodes, sheriff, to Dickens & Co., April 2, 1856, Deed Book 32, Fayette County, 328. The Wesleyan Methodist Church now occupies this site.

19 Diary of Orville Hickman Browning, entry for Thursday, May 11, 1854 (Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield).

20 Robards, according to the records in the Fayette Circuit Court, was in continual litigation over the condition of his slaves. Many suits were brought by buyers who alleged that slaves which they had purchased from him under a "warranty of soundness" were in fact diseased. Robards would deny the charge and present evidence of the most minute physical examination which the buyer had made himself at the time of purchase. A typical case was *Griffin & Pullum v. Lewis C. Robards* (File 1291, Fayette Circuit Court). Plaintiffs had purchased Delphia, a mulatto girl eighteen years old. On her way with a drove of some eighty slaves to New Orleans, she had died at Natchez, Mississippi, with "nigger consumption." Suit was brought against Robards who had warranted her "sound in limb and body and a slave for life," and Robards introduced several witnesses to testify as to the rigid personal inspection to which she had been subjected before leaving his jail in Lexington. Her "small hands, tapering fingers and the beautiful proportions of her body" had been "commented upon by those present."

21 *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, October 20, 1849, and later issues.

22 *Martha v. Lewis C. Robards* (File 1285, Fayette Circuit Court).

23 Deposition of John T. Widdington, *ibid.*

24 *Henrietta Wood, by etc. v. Lewis Robards* (File 1271, *ibid.*).

25 Will Book S, Fayette County, 270-425. Those victims of the cholera who were able to make wills before they died frequently provided liberally for the protection and welfare of their slaves. Polly L. Ficklin emancipated all her Negroes and gave them the village of Kirkville where they lived, to be held in common for the benefit of all, "particularly those who from age, infirmity or

infancy are unable to support themselves." *Ibid.*, 272. George Harp directed that his slaves "shall have the liberty of selecting the persons whom they will serve." *Ibid.*, 268.

²⁶ Browning Diary, entry for Monday, May 8, 1854.

²⁷ *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, October 24, 1849.

²⁸ The new constitution was published in full *ibid.*, December 29, 1849.

²⁹ *Louisville Courier*, November 12, 1849.

³⁰ The lower court decided against Todd's heirs, and its opinion was affirmed by the Court of Appeals. *Todd's Heirs v. Wickliffe*, 51 Ky. Reports, 289.

³¹ Herndon, *Lincoln*, II, 362.

CHAPTER XIII

¹ Will Book S, Fayette County, 576. The will was probated on February 12, 1850. The slaves were emancipated at the May term of court, 1850. Order Book 12, Fayette County, 512.

² *Illinois Daily Journal*, February 2, 1850.

³ Lincoln to John D. Johnston, February 23, 1850, *Works*, II, 76-77.

⁴ William E. Barton, *The Soul of Abraham Lincoln* (New York, Doran, 1920), 50.

⁵ The volume of *The Christian's Defense* that Lincoln read was for many years in the possession of Emilie Todd Helm.

⁶ Barton, *Soul of Lincoln*, 156.

⁷ *George R. C. Todd, Complainant v. Elizabeth L. Todd, Abraham Lincoln et al., Defendants* (File 1389, Fayette Circuit Court).

⁸ *John Parker v. Robert Parker's Heirs* (File 1242, *ibid.*).

⁹ Barton, *Soul of Lincoln*, 162, 270. Lincoln appointed Dr. Smith consul at Dundee, Scotland, which position he held until his death in 1871.

¹⁰ "His mind was in Washington rather than in Springfield. . . . The words and deeds of those who engaged in the historic discussion of 1850 were to be woven into the strange and variegated fabric of Lincoln's destiny." Beveridge, *Abraham Lincoln*, II, 72.

¹¹ "Lincoln read and pondered every word uttered by Clay, Calhoun and Webster during the momentous session." *Ibid.*

¹² *Congressional Globe*, 31 Cong., 1 Sess., Appendix, 1414.

¹³ *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, July 27, 1850.

¹⁴ *Cong. Globe*, 31 Cong., 1 Sess., Appendix, 1486-91.

¹⁵ *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, July 27, 1850.

¹⁶ Lincoln to Joshua Speed, February 20, 1849, *Works*, II, 28-29.

¹⁷ Whitney, *Life on the Circuit*; Jesse W. Weik, *The Real Lincoln: A Portrait* (Boston, Houghton, 1922), 188-206.

¹⁸ *Springfield Daily Journal*, June 29, 1852.

¹⁹ "Argued case agt. Williamson. The evidence was very strong, almost conclusive. . . . At the persuasion of Lincoln I addressed the jury for something over two hours. . . . I believe him to be guilty, but wish him acquitted. . . . I am sorry for the poor devil." Diary of Orville H. Browning, entry for July 13, 1852. The jury found the defendant guilty.

²⁰ Underwood, Clay's colleague from Kentucky, informed the Senate that on the Sunday morning before he died, Clay said to him: "There may be some question as to where my remains shall be put; some persons may designate

Frankfort, Kentucky. I wish to repose in the cemetery in Lexington where many of my friends and connections are buried." *Springfield Daily Journal*, July 9, 1852.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Works*, II, 121-32. Lincoln's address was published serially in the *Springfield Daily Journal*, July 14-17, 1852.

²³ See affidavits of William S. McChesney, Mrs. E. L. Todd, George R. C. Todd, and Thomas S. Redd, *George R. C. Todd v. Elizabeth L. Todd et al.* (File 1389, Fayette Circuit Court); also Order Book 36, Fayette Circuit Court, 539, 548.

²⁴ *Oldham & Hemingway v. Abraham Lincoln et al.* (File 1268, Fayette Circuit Court).

²⁵ Lincoln to George B. Kinkead, May 27, 1853 (Townsend Collection).

²⁶ Answer of Abraham Lincoln, filed June 13, 1853, *Oldham & Hemingway v. Abraham Lincoln et al.* (File 1268, Fayette Circuit Court).

²⁷ Lincoln to George B. Kinkead, July 6, 1853 (Townsend Collection).

²⁸ This suit was filed by Lincoln and Edwards against Levi Todd and Louise Todd, his wife, March 24, 1853 (File 1226, Fayette Circuit Court), but was dismissed June 15, 1853. The record, however, is missing, and the nature of the action cannot now be ascertained.

²⁹ Lincoln to George B. Kinkead, September 13, 1853, *Works*, II, 203-204.

³⁰ This suit against Lincoln was discovered by the author in 1922. Prior to that time, the incident was wholly unknown and the statement by all Lincoln biographers that his integrity had never been assailed was conceded beyond question. Following the discovery of the suit, Lincoln's letters to his local lawyer were unearthed from the attic in the old home of George B. Kinkead, where they had lain for nearly seventy years. William H. Townsend, *Abraham Lincoln, Defendant . . .* (Boston, Houghton, 1923).

³¹ *Works*, II, 219.

CHAPTER XIV

¹ *Kentucky Statesman*, April 4, 1854.

² *Ibid.*, April 11, 1854.

³ *Works*, III, 512, 514.

⁴ *Springfield Illinois State Journal*, July 11, 1854.

⁵ Clay, *Life*, 232; Clay in Rice, *Reminiscences*, 293-94.

⁶ *Springfield Illinois State Register*, July 12, 1854.

⁷ *Illinois State Journal*, July 11, 14, 1854.

⁸ Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln*, II, 168.

⁹ Lincoln to Elihu B. Washburne, February 9, 1855, *Works*, II, 305.

¹⁰ Lincoln to James S. Sanford, March 10, 1855, *ibid.*, 308.

¹¹ K. Helm, *Mary, Wife of Lincoln*, 106-15.

¹² George Robertson, *Scrap Book on Law and Politics, Men and Times* (Lexington, Elder, 1855), 21-26; *Annals of Congress*, 15 Cong., 2 Sess., 1238.

¹³ Lincoln to George Robertson, August 15, 1855, *Works*, II, 317-18.

¹⁴ Lincoln to Joshua F. Speed, August 24, 1855, *ibid.*, 320-23.

¹⁵ Pratt Diary, entry for January 1, 1856.

¹⁶ *Kyler v. Dunlap*, 57 Ky. Reports, 447.

¹⁷ The original of this letter is in the Townsend Collection.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

- 20 *Works*, II, 461.
- 21 W. P. Boyd to John J. Crittenden, July 17, 1858, Crittenden Mss. (Library of Congress).
- 22 *Works*, I, 448.
- 23 *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, August 4, 1858.
- 24 *Ibid.*, August 18, 1858.
- 25 Nicolay and Hay, *Abraham Lincoln*, II, 160.
- 26 Edwin E. Sparks (ed.), *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates of 1858* (Springfield, Illinois State Historical Library, 1908), 148-90.
- 27 *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, October 30, 1858.
- 28 *Political Debates between Hon. Abraham Lincoln and Hon. Stephen A. Douglas* (Columbus, Follett, Foster, 1860), 75. All quotations from Lincoln's speeches are taken from a copy of the *Debates* autographed and presented by Lincoln to his former law partner, Stephen T. Logan, now in the Townsend Collection.
- 29 Sparks, 311-20.
- 30 *Political Debates*, 136.
- 31 Koerner, *Memoirs*, II, 66-67.
- 32 *Illinois Daily State Register*, October 23, 1858.
- 33 Lincoln to John J. Crittenden, July 7, 1858, *Works*, II, 483-84.
- 34 Mrs. Coleman, *Crittenden*, II, 162.
- 35 "I am the only person in the world who knows you wrote Lincoln . . . what is out has been guessed at." Herndon to Crittenden, November 1, 1858, Crittenden Mss.
- 36 For a full account of this controversy see *Illinois Daily State Register*, October 23, 26, 28, 30, November 1, 2, 1858; and *Illinois State Journal*, October 25, 27, 29, 30, November 1, 2, 1858.
- 37 Oliver R. Barrett (ed.), *Lincoln's Last Speech in Springfield in the Campaign of 1858* (Chicago, Chicago, 1924).
- 38 Morgan, *ibid.*, 22.
- 39 Herndon to Theodore Parker, November 8, 1858, in Joseph Fort Newton, *Lincoln and Herndon* (Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Torch, 1910), 234.
- 40 *Chicago Daily Democrat*, November 9, 1858.
- 41 *Works*, V, 216.
- 42 Lincoln to Crittenden, November 4, 1858, *ibid.*, 90.
- 43 Lincoln to A. G. Henry, November 19, 1858, *ibid.*, 94.

CHAPTER XV

- 1 Lincoln to Maria Bullock, January 3, 1859, *Works*, III, 348.
- 2 Lincoln to T. J. Prichett, April 16, 1859, *ibid.*, 377.
- 3 Robert Todd Lincoln Collection.
- 4 Willis Thornton, "The American Centaur," in *American Heritage* (Burlington, Vt., 1947-), n. s. II (Winter, 1951), 12-15.
- 5 Printed copy of these testimonials are in the Robert Todd Lincoln Collection.
- 6 Barton, *Abraham Lincoln*, I, 169; Reep, *Lincoln at New Salem*, 98.
- 7 *Works*, III, 438; see also *Address of Abraham Lincoln of Illinois in Cincinnati, Ohio, September 17, 1859* (Cincinnati, Lotz, 1910).
- 8 Lincoln to William M. Dickson, June 7, 1860, *Works*, IV, 72.
- 9 Lincoln to Lyman Trumbull, April 29, 1860, *ibid.*, 45-46.
- 10 *Kentucky Statesman*, April 13, 1860.

11 Card of Cassius M. Clay, *ibid.*; Clay, *Life*, 250-55.

12 Addison G. Proctor's address, in Grand Army Hall and Memorial Association of Illinois, *Twenty Third Lincoln Birthday Service in Memorial Hall, February 12, 1922* (Chicago, 1922), 30-40. Proctor says that this spokesman for the Kentucky delegation was Cassius M. Clay. Clay, however, says in his *Life*: "I did not attend the convention." When the author called Proctor's attention to this statement, he still insisted that "Clay was certainly at the hotel that night, whether he was at the convention or not. . . . I feel," he said, "that your Cassius M. Clay was one of the factors in giving Lincoln to this nation and to our Party its first national victory. He was one of the *big men* of those times." Proctor to the author, October 12, 1922.

13 "At one time a thousand voices called Clay! Clay! to the convention. If the multitude could have had their way, Mr. Clay would have been put on the ticket by acclamation." M. Halstead, *Caucuses of 1860* . . . (Columbus, Follett, Foster, 1860), 151.

14 *Works*, IV, 53.

15 Lincoln to Clay, July 20, 1860, *ibid.*, 85.

16 Clay to Lincoln, August 6, 1860, *ibid.*, 93n.

17 Lincoln to Clay, August 10, 1860, *ibid.*, 92.

18 Herndon, *Lincoln*, III, 478.

19 *Kentucky Statesman*, August 17, 1860.

20 Lincoln to Samuel Haycraft, August 16, 23, 1860, *Works*, IV, 97, 99.

21 *Kentucky Statesman*, September 11, 1860.

22 *Ibid.*, November 9, 1860. The omission of Fayette County from the list of Breckinridge returns was deliberate; Bell carried the county by a majority. He also received a plurality in the state. *Ibid.*, December 4, 1860.

23 Horace Buckner to John J. Frost (Townsend Collection).

24 Letter to Charles Hedden, December 28, 1860 (Townsend Collection).

25 *Works*, IV, 141.

26 *Kentucky Statesman*, November 9, 1860.

27 "From the beginning of the rebellion, Lincoln felt that Kentucky would be a turning weight in the scale of war. He believed he knew the temper and fidelity of his native state, and gave her his special care and confidence." Nicolay and Hay, *Abraham Lincoln*, IV, 235.

28 Lincoln to Browning, September 22, 1861, *Works*, IV, 190.

29 Robertson to Crittenden, December 16, 1860, Crittenden Mss.

30 *Works*, IV, 173.

31 Davis to Crittenden, December 10, 1860, Crittenden Mss.

32 *Kentucky Statesman*, November 30, 1860.

33 Robert J. Breckinridge to W. C. P. Breckinridge, November 18, 1860, Breckinridge Mss.

34 *Kentucky Statesman*, December 28, 1860.

35 *Ibid.*, January 4, 1861.

36 Garret Davis to Crittenden, December 10, 1860, and Crittenden note, May 1, 1863, Crittenden Mss.

37 See Chapter XVI.

38 *Louisville Daily Journal*, January 11, 1861.

39 S. Guiteau to Robert J. Breckinridge, January 24, 1861, Breckinridge Mss.

40 *Illinois State Journal*, February 22, 1861.

41 Letters to Robert J. Breckinridge from Charles Hodge, January 10, 1861; Lewis F. Alley, January 14, 1861; Francis Lieber, January 16, 1861; L. R. Baugher, January 19, 1861; Jos. Smith, January 25, 1861; and D. B. Duffield, February

17, 1861, Breckinridge Mss. "A. J. M." writes: "I am circulating the address among my friends—it should be in the hands of every one. It has strengthened the hearts & spirit of the conservative men here & will do much good." "To part with the Stars & Stripes would be a sad & mournful alternative," wrote a correspondent from Petersburg, Virginia, "but 'Old Abe's' speeches so far give little promise of conciliation." McIlvaine to Robert J. Breckinridge, February 18, 1861, *ibid.*

42 "I greatly rejoice," wrote Senator Garret Davis, "that Kentucky has a native son who is wise and dauntless enough to hold her to the course that will pilot her through these perilous breakers." Davis to Robert J. Breckinridge, January 15, 1861, *ibid.*

43 W. W. Bell to Robert J. Breckinridge, January 19, 1861, *ibid.*

44 Leslie Combs to Howard Combs, February 4, 1861, in *Louisville Journal*, March 4, 1861.

45 *Herndon's Life of Lincoln* (Angle ed.), 389-90.

46 *Works*, IV, 190.

47 Robert Todd Lincoln Collection.

48 *Works*, IV, 197.

49 *Ibid.*, 200.

50 John Jeffrey to "Dear Aleck," Cincinnati, February 16, 1861 (Townsend Collection).

51 *Washington Evening Star*, February 13, 1861.

52 *Ibid.*, and later issues.

53 *Louisville Daily Courier*, March 2, 1861.

CHAPTER XVI

1 Allen Johnson, *Stephen A. Douglas: A Study in American Politics* (New York, Macmillan, 1908), 464.

2 *Kentucky Statesman*, March 12, 1861.

3 Mme. Mentelle died September 8, 1860, having "nearly completed her 90th year." "There are few women," said the *Statesman*, "who lived so simple and private a life, who were so widely known. Her rare gifts and still rarer attainments won her the admiration and regard of some of the most distinguished men of her day. Her pure, simple, frugal life, free from everything like affectation, and full of charity, kindness and good works was worthy of such gifts. She preserved all her faculties unclouded to her death. Her intellect was above the power of time, and old age produced no weakness in her great mind." *Ibid.*, September 14, 1860.

4 *Ibid.*, March 12, 1861.

5 Lincoln's Farewell Address at Springfield, February 11, 1861, *Works*, IV, 190.

6 *Works*, IV, 557.

7 Harry E. Pratt (ed.), *Concerning Mr. Lincoln . . .* (Springfield, Abraham Lincoln Association, 1944), 99.

8 Lincoln's statement to L. B. Todd, March 23, 1861, according to statements of Dr. Alexander T. Parker, February 3, 1919, and Captain J. R. Howard, May 1, 1922 (Townsend Collection).

9 *Kentucky Statesman*, March 8, 1861.

10 Pratt Diary, entry for April 13, 1861.

11 K. Helm, *Mary, Wife of Lincoln*, 184.

12 *Ibid.*, 187.

¹³ Elizabeth Todd Grimsley, "Six Months in the White House," in *Journal of the Illinois Historical Society* (Springfield, 1908-), XIX (1926-1927), 43-73.

¹⁴ Nicolay and Hay, *Abraham Lincoln*, IV, 106; Clay, *Life*, 259-64.

¹⁵ Clay, *Life*, 264.

¹⁶ "Kentucky will furnish no troops for the wicked purpose of subduing her sister Southern states," was Governor Magoffin's terse reply to Lincoln's call for volunteers.

¹⁷ *Kentucky Statesman*, May 14, 1861.

¹⁸ It has been hitherto supposed that all of Mrs. Lincoln's half sisters were Confederate sympathizers, but a series of recently discovered letters written by Margaret Todd Kellogg to Lizzie Fleming during the war, formerly owned by Mrs. William C. Goodloe of Lexington, shows her to have been a staunch Unionist. Mrs. Kellogg, however, maintained the most affectionate relations with her mother, Betsy Todd, and the deepest solicitude for her brothers and sisters on the other side.

¹⁹ *Kentucky Statesman*, April 16, May 24, 1861.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, April 19, 1861.

²¹ *Ibid.*, April 23, 1861. On February 1 the *Statesman* chided those who raised the Stars and Stripes, saying, "Let children play with flags."

²² *Ibid.*, April 30, 1861.

²³ "In the untimely loss of your noble son," wrote Lincoln to Colonel Ellsworth's parents, May 25, 1861, "our affliction here is scarcely less than your own." *Works*, IV, 385.

²⁴ *Kentucky Statesman*, May 28, 1861. The issue of June 25, 1861, refers to Jackson as the "Immortal Hero who slew the ill-bred braggart at Alexandria."

²⁵ "The people don't talk about anything but Lincoln's Inaugural address and your *Review*," Steele to Robert J. Breckinridge, August 9, 1861, Breckinridge Mss. "There is a large demand for it over here which has yet not begun to be satisfied," J. D. Jackson to Robert J. Breckinridge, November 27, 1861, *ibid.* "I think the last article, even better than the first, if that were possible," wrote R. W. Landis from Missouri. "I go for it *every* word. . . . It is doing a great deal of good and our people have been publishing parts of it, and it fills the Union people with great delight," Landis to John Breckinridge, July 11, 1861, *ibid.*

²⁶ L. A. Lapsley to Robert J. Breckinridge, October 3, 1861, *ibid.*

²⁷ *Kentucky Statesman*, June 14, 1861.

²⁸ David Sayre to Dr. Louis A. Sayre, May 14, 1861 (copy in Townsend Collection).

²⁹ Five members of the Kentucky delegation in Congress wrote their names on the bottom of this letter. Colonel Bayles, a brick contractor of Lexington, organized the Fourth Kentucky Cavalry that bore a conspicuous part in the battle of Chickamauga and the engagements around Atlanta. *Works*, IV, 464.

³⁰ Orlando Brown to John J. Crittenden, July 5, 1861, Crittenden Mss.

³¹ *Kentucky Statesman*, July 12, 1861.

³² *Works*, IV, 434.

³³ R. W. Landis to John Breckinridge, July 11, 1861, Breckinridge Mss.

³⁴ D. R. Happersett to Robert J. Breckinridge, September 13, 1861, *ibid.*

³⁵ *Kentucky Statesman*, September 13, 1861.

³⁶ Pratt Diary, entry for September 30, 1861.

³⁷ *Kentucky Statesman*, September 24, 1861.

³⁸ With the last issue the *Statesman* fired a parting volley: "Who then has betrayed you? Whose soldiers now trod your soil? Whose Army is encamped

around you? Whose arms and munitions flaunt their flags in your faces and shriek their partisan cries in your ears? Lincoln! Lincoln! Lincoln!" *Ibid.*

³⁹ Pratt Diary, entry for December 16, 1861.

⁴⁰ Basil W. Duke, *History of Morgan's Cavalry* (Cincinnati, Miami, 1867), 89-90.

⁴¹ Samuel J. Baird to Robert J. Breckinridge, October 31, 1861, Breckinridge Mss.

⁴² L. B. Todd to Robert J. Breckinridge, November 23, 1861, *ibid.*

⁴³ J. C. S. Blackburn in Bennett H. Young (ed.), *Kentucky Eloquence, Past and Present . . .* (Louisville, La Bree, 1907), 61.

⁴⁴ *Cong. Globe*, 37 Cong., 2 Sess., 9.

⁴⁵ "I need not say that your last article has produced a profound impression. Our ablest lawyers call it the ablest paper that the crisis has produced. It has been copied very extensively and we believe has done immense good. I do not think it is too much to say that your articles have done more to influence the intellect of the nation than any other instrumentality." S. Guiteau to Robert J. Breckinridge, Baltimore, January 7, 1862, Breckinridge Mss.

⁴⁶ J. R. Hughes, March 6, 1862; Jos. Wood, March 7, 1862; and R. D. Finley, March 7, 1862, to Robert J. Breckinridge, *ibid.*

⁴⁷ L. B. Todd to Robert J. Breckinridge, March 6, 1862, *ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Cincinnati Enquirer*, May 21, 1862; *Cincinnati Evening Times*, May 21, 1862.

⁴⁹ Order Book 44, Fayette Circuit Court, 99-328.

⁵⁰ Lincoln to Gratz, August 23, 1863, *Works*, VI, 148.

⁵¹ *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, October 25, 1862.

⁵² *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, August 27, 1862.

⁵³ "On yesterday the paper had published, under the head '*A Pious Wish*,' a speech mother made on Saturday at the Exhibition. . . . The speech alluded to *John M.* She wished there were *ten thousand*." Margaret Kellogg to Lizzie Fleming, June 10, 1862 (formerly owned by Mrs. William C. Goodloe, Lexington, Ky.). See also *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, June 9, 1862.

⁵⁴ Pratt Diary, entry for October 27, 1862.

⁵⁵ Emilie Todd Helm Scrap Books (Townsend Collection).

⁵⁶ *Works*, V, 364.

⁵⁷ The original of this letter is still in the possession of the Clay family at Lexington. *Works*, V, 363-64.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 386.

⁵⁹ Townsend Collection.

⁶⁰ Clay, *Life*, 302-309.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 310.

⁶² William Henry Perrin (ed.), *History of Fayette County, Kentucky . . .* (Chicago, Baskin, 1882), 548-60.

⁶³ Morton to Stanton, September 2, 1862, *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (128 vols., Washington, D. C., 1880-1901), Ser. 1, XVI, pt. 2, p. 357.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 465.

⁶⁵ From original broadside in Coleman Collection.

⁶⁶ Francis Fisher Browne, *The Every-day Life of Abraham Lincoln . . .* (rev. ed., New York, Putnam, 1915), 305.

⁶⁷ Confederate sympathizers had not lost hope of "permanent deliverance" in Lexington. "In a letter from mother [Mrs. Todd] last night, she has concluded to remain until her *Southern friends* arrive, in order to try and protect some of her not altogether *conservative* ones in Ky." Margaret Kellogg to Lizzie Flem-

ing, Cincinnati, March 20, 1863 (formerly owned by Mrs. William C. Goodloe).
 68 Robert J. Breckinridge to R. Bernie, November 4, 1862, Breckinridge Mss.

CHAPTER XVII

1 Levi Coffin, *Reminiscences of Levi Coffin* . . . (Cincinnati, Western Tract Society, 1876), 606.

2 Coffin, 612-18.

3 *Works*, V, 502-503.

4 *Ibid.*, 512.

5 Act approved February 14, 1873, 42 Cong., 3 Sess., chap. CXLI.

6 Utley to Lincoln, November 17, 1862 (Robert Todd Lincoln Collection).

7 Utley to Randall, November 17, 1862, *ibid.*

8 Thos. P. Dudley to Lincoln, November 20, 1862 (copy in Townsend Collection).

9 Oliver Christian Bosbyshell, *The 48th in the War* . . . (Philadelphia, Avil, 1895), 1-21.

10 Letters of Henry Clay Heisler to his sister, April 20 and May 31, 1863 (in possession of his grandson, Donald Hobart, vice-president of Curtis Publishing Co., Philadelphia).

11 Bosbyshell, 108.

12 *Ibid.*, 113.

13 Henry Clay Heisler to his sister, September 15, 1863.

14 *Works*, VI, 220.

15 *Ibid.*

16 Townsend Collection.

17 K. Helm, *Mary, Wife of Lincoln*, 216.

18 *Ibid.*, 221.

19 *Ibid.*, 232.

20 *Works*, VII, 64.

21 Benjamin F. Butler, *Private and Official Correspondence* . . . (5 vols., Norwood, Mass., Plimpton, 1917), IV, 98, 99.

22 *Ibid.*, 99-101.

23 Henry Kyd Douglas to Emilie Todd Helm, September 26, 1898 (Townsend Collection).

24 Henry Kyd Douglas to Emilie Todd Helm, October 4, 1898, *ibid.*

25 Emilie Todd Helm Scrap Books.

26 *Report on the Treatment of Prisoners of War by the Rebel Authorities* . . ., *House Reports*, 40 Cong., 3 Sess., No. 45 (Washington, 1869), 862.

27 Emilie Todd Helm Scrap Books.

28 *Report on the Treatment of Prisoners of War*, 1005.

29 *Ibid.*, 1008, 1086; Emilie Todd Helm Scrap Books.

CHAPTER XVIII

1 *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, January 6, 1864.

2 *Ibid.*, January 16, 1864. The resolution was so bitter that a motion was made to expel Davis from the Senate.

3 Burbridge to Maxwell, October 30, 1864, *War of the Rebellion*, Ser. 1, XXXIX, 526.

⁴ *War of the Rebellion*, Ser. 1, XXXIX, 203.

⁵ Ida M. Tarbell, *The Life of Abraham Lincoln* . . . (4 vols., New York, Lincoln Historical Society, 1903), IV, 236, 240, 250.

⁶ "It might be thought strange, he said, that he had in this way submitted the disposal of matters when the way was not clear to his mind what he should do. God had decided this question in favor of the slaves." Entry for September 22, 1862, *Diary of Gideon Welles* . . . (3 vols., Boston, Houghton, 1911), I, 143.

⁷ *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, June 16, 1864.

⁸ Entry for April 30, 1864. The original diary is in the John Hay Memorial Library of Brown University at Providence, Rhode Island.

⁹ Rufus Rockwell Wilson, *Intimate Memories of Lincoln* (Elmira, N. Y., Primavera, 1945), 578.

¹⁰ *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, March 12, 1864. "He elaborated two ideas," said the *National Unionist*. "Old Abe was a rascal, and ought to be hung, and McClellan was a great Democrat and ought to be elected President." *Lexington National Unionist*, April 8, 1864.

¹¹ "Fayette is overwhelmingly opposed to the Administration and its policy, and this will be made manifest upon all occasions when the popular voice is fully expressed." *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, April 13, 1864.

¹² W. C. Goodloe to Robert J. Breckinridge, April 3, 1864, Breckinridge Mss.

¹³ Hiram Shaw to Robert J. Breckinridge, March —, 1864, *ibid*.

¹⁴ R. L. Stanton to Robert Breckinridge, June 4, 1864, *ibid*.

¹⁵ Sallie Ward Hunt to Mrs. Lincoln, March 31, 1864, original for many years in the collection of Oliver R. Barrett of Chicago.

¹⁶ *Works*, VII, 295-96.

¹⁷ "When the Doctor was told of this resemblance he replied that he had a son in the hall 'who is the very spit of John.'" Forney in Temple Bodley and Samuel M. Wilson, *History of Kentucky* (4 vols., Chicago, Clarke, 1928), II, 353.

¹⁸ William E. Dodd, "Lincoln's Last Struggle—Victory?" in *Lincoln Centennial Association Papers* . . . 1927 (Springfield, Ill., 1927).

¹⁹ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, June 10, 1864; *New York Tribune*, June 10, 1864; D. F. Murphy, *Presidential Election, 1864: Proceedings of the National Union Convention* . . . (New York, Baker & Godwin, 1864), 8.

²⁰ Browning Diary, entry for June 12, 1864.

²¹ "Rev. Robt. J. Breckinridge was Burbridge's friend and adviser. He was frequently summoned to headquarters, and Burbridge often went miles to consult the wise old Doctor." General Jas. S. Brisbin in *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, November 25, 1867.

²² Duke, *Morgan's Cavalry*, 513. In fact, many of Morgan's new command bore a secret grievance against him and the Kentuckians in his brigade. "If you will notice, no man has ever been noticed for gallantry either by Morgan, Breckinridge or Duke who has not come from Lexington or thereabouts." J. H. Clemmons to Doctor Marsh, December 3, 1864, *War of the Rebellion*, Ser. 1, XLV, pt. 2, p. 505.

²³ *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, June 11, 1864.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, June 15, 1864. The editor was fair enough to say that General Morgan and the Kentuckians in his command sought without avail to protect private property, and this is corroborated by General Basil Duke: "On this raid, great and inexcusable excesses were committed, but except in two or three flagrant instances, they were committed by men who had never before served with General Morgan. The men of his old division and Giltner's fine brigade were rarely guilty." Duke, 528.

- 25 Pratt Diary, entry for June 10, 1864.
- 26 Burbridge to Halleck, June 13, 1864, *War of the Rebellion*, Ser. 1, XXXIX, 1, 20.
- 27 Lincoln to Burbridge, June 14, 1864, *Works*, VII, 391.
- 28 Levi Todd to Lincoln, September 12, 1864 (Robert Todd Lincoln Collection).
- 29 Robert J. Breckinridge to Lincoln, September 12, 1864, *ibid*.
- 30 Robert J. Breckinridge to W. C. P. Breckinridge, September 1, 1864, Breckinridge Mss.
- 31 *National Unionist*, November 11, 1864.
- 32 Emilie Todd Helm to Lincoln, October 30, 1864 (Robert Todd Lincoln Collection).
- 33 Statements of Emilie Todd Helm to author.
- 34 *Works*, VIII, 98-99.
- 35 *War of the Rebellion*, Ser. 1, XXXIX, 749.
- 36 Collins, *History of Kentucky*, I, 149.
- 37 *Louisville Journal*, November 17, 1864.
- 38 General Burbridge's friendship for Dr. Breckinridge was doubtless the reason for Steele's not being brought to Lexington. General Brisbin says that when he heard of Steele's capture he asked Burbridge what he intended to do with him and the general replied: "Nothing if I can help it. Dr. Breckinridge has had enough of trouble already." General Brisbin in *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, November 25, 1867.
- 39 Joseph C. Breckinridge to Robert J. Breckinridge, December 25, 1864, Breckinridge Mss.
- 40 Chas. Egenton to R. J. Breckinridge, December 18, 1864, *ibid*.
- 41 Tarrance Kirby to Lincoln, Bowling Green, Kentucky, September 8, 1864 (Townsend Collection).
- 42 Martha M. Jones to Lincoln, February 1, 1865 (letter and Lincoln's pass in Townsend Collection).
- 43 Emilie Todd Helm Scrap Books; Judge Robertson's account to George B. Kincaid (memorandum in Townsend Collection).
- 44 For a more detailed account see John M. Bullock, "President Lincoln's Visiting Card," in *Century Magazine* (New York, 1881-1930), LV (1898), 565-71.
- 45 *Louisville Daily Journal*, February 27, 1865.
- 46 Jos. Breckinridge to John Breckinridge, April 10, 1865, Breckinridge Mss.
- 47 *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, April 12, 1865.
- 48 *Ibid.*, April 15, 1865.

CHAPTER XIX

¹ Contrary to prevailing opinion, there was genuine sorrow among those leaders of the Confederacy who realized what Lincoln's death meant to the South. Jefferson Davis spoke of it as "The last crowning calamity of a despairing and defeated though righteous cause." John J. Craven, *Prison Life of Jefferson Davis* . . . (New York, Carleton, 1866), diary entry for August 20, 1865. Mrs. Jefferson Davis says in her *Jefferson Davis, Ex-president of the Confederate States of America, a Memoir by his wife* (2 vols., New York, Belford, 1890), II, 615: "I burst into tears." "I regret Mr. Lincoln's death as much as any man in the North," said General Lee, "and I believe him to be the epitome of magnanimity and good faith." Clark, *Lincoln in the National Capital*, 118.

² A. E. Carroll to Robert J. Breckinridge, April 17, 1865, Breckinridge Mss.

³ S. Guiteau to Robert J. Breckinridge, April 27, 1865, *ibid.*

⁴ Pratt Diary, entry for April 17, 1865.

⁵ *National Unionist*, April 18, 1865.

⁶ *Lexington Observer & Reporter*, April 19, 1865.

⁷ Willard Rouse Jillson, *Lincoln Back Home . . .* (Lexington, Transylvania, 1932), 82; *Louisville Daily Journal*, April 27, 1865.

⁸ *Frankfort (Ky.) Commonwealth*, May 9, 1865.

⁹ *National Unionist*, April 21, 1865.

¹⁰ "The lilacs were in bloom . . ., and Whitman has forever associated their annual efflorescence with memories of the last journey of Abraham Lincoln." Barton, *Abraham Lincoln*, II, 365. See Walt Whitman's "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd."

¹¹ *National Unionist*, April 28, 1865.

¹² *Ibid.*, April 21, 1865.

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A View of Main Street, Lexington, Kentucky, Looking from the Phoenix Hotel, about 1851